

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

2 May 2023

**Subject: Proposal to Retain and Invest in Silverwood School
Chippenham and Trowbridge Campuses**

**Cabinet Member: Cllr Laura Mayes Deputy Leader and Cabinet Leader for
Children's Services, Education and Skills; and
Cllr Jane Davies Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care,
SEND and Inclusion**

Key Decision: Key

Executive Summary

This report seeks Cabinet approval to invest in Silverwood School Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses to address the increasing demand for specialist school placements. The proposals follow full consideration of the responses given within the formal consultation on changes arising from the proposed redesign and refurbishment of the campuses and the effect this has on the Silverwood operating model.

Silverwood School leadership team have put forward proposals for a new operating model that works best for the whole school community, both current and future, taking account of what can be delivered and what is sustainable - from a staffing, pupil safety and financial perspective.

Silverwood School leadership team believe that the educational needs of current and future secondary-aged pupils are best served at the Rowde campus, complemented by primary provision across Chippenham, Trowbridge and Rowde campuses. There is recognition that all children due to transition to Rowde will need sensitive, carefully-managed transitions to support the move – but ultimately, they will benefit from the education they receive with their peers, in a secondary campus specifically designed to meet their educational needs.

Proposals

It is recommended that:

- I. Cabinet approves the change to Silverwood School pupil numbers, increasing registered place numbers from 410 to 460.
- II. Cabinet approves the change in age range on the campuses to deliver the operating model recommended by Silverwood School. This changes all-through education at Chippenham, Trowbridge and Rowde, to primary education at Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses and all-through education at Rowde campus.

- III. Cabinet approves the refurbishment of Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses, funded from pre-approved 'Silverwood Phase 5' capital funding - with decision-making in respect of implementing the proposals delegated to the Director of Education & Skills.

Reason for Proposals

The proposal to invest in the substantial refurbishment of Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses is required if Wiltshire Council is to meet growing demand for special school places. The proposal is a cost-effective capital solution to maximising Silverwood School provision, securing 150 places.

It is unequivocally necessary to grow the school offer for learners with SEND. Through an investment in, and retention of, Silverwood School Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses, children with SEND will be able to access local primary-age provision; complemented by an all-through offer (Reception to Sixth Form) at Silverwood Rowde.

Families with SEND will have the choice to attend the local primary school at Chippenham, Trowbridge or Rowde campuses followed by the more extensive secondary school experience at Rowde campus only, located 10 miles away from the primary school campuses. Silverwood School will continue to provide a hybrid Sixth Form offer at Rowde and Silverwood College (previously known as Poplar).

Under this proposal, Silverwood children are offered the choice of a local primary school education – enjoying shorter travel times to school and a better balance between school and home time. The proposals deliver significant cost savings (place and transport costs) when compared with Independent Special School alternatives. It also satisfies a growing demand for special school places, enabling Wiltshire Council to fulfil its statutory duties in a mainstream, specialist provision.

Terence Herbert
Chief Executive

Wiltshire Council

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Purpose of Report

1. The proposal to invest in the substantial refurbishment of Silverwood School Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses is required if Wiltshire Council is to meet growing demand for special school places. Place planning modelling has indicated that Wiltshire Council needs a 7.2-7.8% increase in provision (equating to 68 special school places) per year for the next five years to meet the growth projections.
2. We are fully invested in the delivery of the System of Excellence across the county and have an ambitious vision to create a truly integrated and inclusive system of outstanding education for all children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The SEND & Inclusion service have ambitious plans to increase the range and quality of options for learners with SEND.
3. It is important to grow the school offer for learners with SEND to meet rising demand. On 19 November 2019 Cabinet approved the establishment of a new maintained special school with a single leadership team for the existing St Nicholas, Rowde and Larkrise schools, and this happened in September 2020 with the new school now being known as Silverwood. In 2019 Cabinet also approved the expansion of the Silverwood Rowde campus to accommodate up to 400 pupils as part of the new special school for 2023/24.
4. With the new build at Rowde campus nearing completion, Cabinet must decide on proposals for the development of Silverwood School. In 2019, Cabinet approved the continuation of the school campuses formerly known as St Nicholas (now Silverwood, Chippenham) and Larkrise (now Silverwood, Trowbridge) until the new provision was ready and it was deemed appropriate to consider the transition of children/young people to the new site at Rowde.
5. On 13 December 2022, pre-consultation proposals were presented to Cabinet. It was proposed that Silverwood Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses were retained and invested in using pre-allocated capital funds; the overall number of places at Silverwood School grows to 460 pupils; and the operating model is amended. To reduce overcrowding at Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses, it was proposed that they deliver primary age provision, complemented by an all-through offer (Reception to Sixth Form) at Silverwood Rowde. Under these proposals, children with SEND would be able to attend the local

primary school at Chippenham, Trowbridge or Rowde campuses followed by the more extensive secondary school experience at Rowde campus only.

6. Silverwood School will continue to provide a hybrid Sixth Form offer, whereby it supports mainstream colleges with their offer, alongside in-house Sixth Form provision for young people with more complex and profound needs at the Silverwood Rowde campus and at the Silverwood Sixth Form College in Chippenham (formerly known as Poplar).

7. There are many practical reasons for refurbishing Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses above other potential sites for Silverwood School. The infrastructure for the special schools is already in place, e.g., hygiene rooms, minibus parking, sensory spaces, hoists etc. A refurbishment project would be better value for money and quicker to implement than alternatives, as the infrastructure exists to support special school activities.

8. Keeping the three sites open offers parents and carers more choice – something they asked for in the 2019 consultation exercise. Retaining primary provision at these campuses expands the offer for young, vulnerable learners and will reduce travel times for primary aged children. A local primary special school place will improve school/home life balance, as many children will enjoy shorter travel distances to school.

9. Since the 2019 consultation, the demand for special school places – at Silverwood and across Wiltshire – has grown significantly. Whilst it was originally envisaged that Silverwood Rowde campus might, in time, meet all the Silverwood place needs, we now know that the approved development plans for the Rowde campus cannot meet growing demand. There needs to be a Silverwood solution that accommodates the places currently delivered by Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses because Silverwood Rowde campus cannot meet this need in its entirety.

10. The proposed refurbishment of Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses will deliver greater compliance with DfE space standards for special schools resulting in an enhanced learning environment for pupils including improvements to outdoor learning and play that is more equitable with the provision at the Rowde campus. This would require a reduction in the number of classrooms at the two campuses, including the removal of some mobile classrooms at the Trowbridge campus that encroach onto the playground. Architectural plans have been developed showing how Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses – once refurbished – would be able to accommodate 75 learners each, in 9 classes per campus.

11. The retention, investment and re-design requires a change in the operating model and age range at Chippenham and Trowbridge, due to the reduction in classrooms. Based on recommendations from Silverwood leadership, it is proposed that classrooms are utilised for 7 year groups (Reception to Year 6), plus 2 classrooms for PMLD (organised by primary need and/or primary key stage). Space constraints do not support a greater number of classrooms – and therefore a wider age range.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

12. Demand for special educational support is rising year on year in Wiltshire. The number of requests for Educational Health Care Needs Assessments continues to grow. The number of learners with Education Health Care Plans has risen by 515, or 11.8%, to 4,880 in the twelve months to March 2023. Place planning forecasts suggest that Wiltshire Council needs to grow special school places by 7.2-7.8% (equating to 68 additional special school places) every year for the next five years to meet growth.

13. The provision of additional special school places is just part of the overall provision. To meet increasing demand for SEND provision, Wiltshire Council has plans to increase special school places; create more resource bases in both primary and secondary schools; and offer enhanced support for mainstream provision across all age groups. There were circa 60 special school places created for 2022/23, with more places in development.

14. Special school capacity will grow in 2023/24 with additions to Silverwood Rowde, the Salisbury Academy of Inspirational Learning (SAIL), and plans to grow capacity at Springfields, Downlands and Exeter House at a future date. In March 2023, Wiltshire Council learnt it was successful in its bid for a 130-place SEND Free School for Wiltshire for learners with Social, Emotional and Mental Health additional needs.

15. All these solutions are deemed preferable to the more costly and geographically distant Independent Special School placements, which attract on average a £30,000- £50,000 annual premium, per place. The cost and out of county provision offered by ISS alternatives were key drivers to invest in the Silverwood School capital programme, including the Rowde new build; works to the Rowde Old House; and the Phase 5 expansion.

16. Ensuring growth in special school capacity is a long-term priority for Wiltshire Council, as it meets a number of priority needs, such as: protecting those who are most vulnerable; ensuring that children and young people with SEND can have the best education and support, provided in good quality estate; ensuring that special education provision in Wiltshire is equitably provided; and reducing the number of pupils who must travel excessive distances to schools outside of Wiltshire.

Background

17. In 2018, Wiltshire Council accepted the need to respond to the sufficiency of provision challenge, with the commitment to fund an additional 220 special school places by 2026, including a minimum growth of 50 places for Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD)/Complex Needs in the north of the county. There was also recognition of the need to reduce overcrowding in two of the special schools, formerly known as Larkrise (Silverwood Trowbridge) and St Nicholas (Silverwood Chippenham); as well as addressing the quality of the provision – particularly the physical condition of Larkrise and St Nicholas.

18. As part of the £38m System of Excellence, Wiltshire Council agreed to fund £3.6million for Silverwood Phase 5 works, i.e., 50 additional special school places for Silverwood School. In May 2019 Cabinet approved the closure of St Nicholas, Larkrise, and Rowdeford schools, as part of an amalgamated Silverwood school and new build at Rowde. A subsequent Cabinet decision in November 2019 agreed to retain Chippenham and Trowbridge sites until it is appropriate for children to transition to Rowde. This decision left the door open on the retention of Chippenham and Trowbridge, either as a short- or long-term option.

19. The 2019 proposals to Cabinet resulted in £3.6 million allocated to the fifth and final stage of the Silverwood programme. The capital was earmarked for the creation of 50 places, to take Silverwood School capacity up to 400 places. It was not stipulated how and where the remaining 50 places would be delivered. Instead, Phase 5 funding was granted for the 'provision of additional special school places based on demand for provision and feedback from key stakeholders - particularly families.

20. Through the initial 2019 consultation period, there was evident parental preference for the retention of the Chippenham and Trowbridge sites. The desire to retain and invest in the two campuses is evident from the 2023 formal consultation too. Whilst the expanding campus at Rowde has garnered increased support since 2019, there remains opposition from a small number of parents to changing the education model at Chippenham and Trowbridge.

21. On 13 December 2022, Cabinet agreed to enter into formal consultation on proposals to:

- Retain Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses;
- Invest in Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses, to address overcrowding; create more communal spaces; and offer more equitable provision with Rowde campus;
- To increase the number of pupils at Silverwood School; and
- To change the age range of pupils at Chippenham and Trowbridge to primary age.

22. The formal consultation was launched on 30 January 2023 and ran for 5 weeks until 5 March 2023.

Main Considerations for the Council

23. The Council approved the award of £3.6million capital funds in 2019 for the creation of 50 additional Silverwood School places. It is proposed that funding is used to refurbish Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses securing 150 primary phase places. The proposed refurbishment of Chippenham and Trowbridge offers a long term solution for Silverwood students, across three key locations.

Place Planning

24. Modelling for specialist places is updated at least annually and needs assessed using health data and future projections of specialist places based on historical datasets and birth rate data. Current projections show a 7.2- 7.8% annual increase equating to 68 new places per year for the next 5 years.

25. Securing 150 special school places – taken together with the additional places at Silverwood Rowde – will future proof the Council’s plan to meet projected designated need for special school places in north Wiltshire. However, the proposed change in student numbers on these campuses triggered a consultation on the change in numbers, as well as the proposed change in use.

Formal consultation

26. In 2019, Cabinet approved the continuation of provision at St Nicholas (Chippenham campus) and Larkrise (Trowbridge campus) until the new provision at Rowde was complete, and Silverwood School was ready to consider the transition of children/young people to the new site at Rowde. In December 2022, proposals for the future of Silverwood were submitted to Cabinet.

27. In adherence to the commitments made in 2019, a full formal consultation was launched on 30 January 2023 and ran for 5 weeks. The consultation was open to the public. Significant effort was made to engage with 430 Silverwood pupils and their families. A full description of the consultation process; the feedback received; and the Silverwood School response to the issues raised is contained in Appendix A.

28. The consultation attracted 141 survey responses, as well as live feedback from face-to-face sessions and 4 email submissions. We would like to extend our thanks for all those that engaged in the consultation for their considered and thoughtful feedback. Responses were received from a range of stakeholders, including parent/carers (55% or 77 respondents); staff (38% or 53 respondents); and other (8%, 11 respondents). Although 77 parent/carers responded to the consultation, most existing Silverwood families did not.

	Responses (no.)	%
Parent carer	77	55
Staff	53	38
Other	11	8
Total	141	100

29. The 141 survey responses are summarised as follows:

Question	Yes	No	Not Sure
Do you agree with the proposal to retain the Silverwood Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses?	96%	2%	2%
Do you agree with the proposal for Wiltshire Council to invest to upgrade the Silverwood Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses?	95%	2%	3%
Do you agree with the proposal to change Silverwood School's registered place number from 410 to 460 from September 2023?	65%	9%	26%
Do you agree with the proposal for a change in age range at Silverwood Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses to primary, age 4-11 (Reception – Year 6) from September 2023?	51%	30%	18%

30. There was unequivocal support for proposals to retain Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses, with 96% of respondents in favour of the proposal. The demand for special school places, taken together with the support for the proposal, means the proposal to retain Chippenham and Trowbridge is recommended to Cabinet.

31. There were high levels of support to invest in Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses (95%), as it was recognised that an investment in the infrastructure and facilities will directly benefit pupils and offer a more equitable environment across the Silverwood School estate. Silverwood Student Council have expressed clear wishes to improve the art, soft play and calm rooms, quiet rooms, grass and nature areas if Cabinet approve the investment.

32. There was 65% support for an increase in overall registered place numbers and there was widespread recognition of the need to grow special school places to meet rising demand. Only 9% of respondents opposed the growth in numbers. It is hoped that the understanding that budgets and teaching staff increase with the number of places, will

reassure those concerned about the capacity to meet the proposed expansion of Silverwood School.

33. There was 51% support for to change the age range to primary phase at Chippenham and Trowbridge and a further 18% of all respondents were unsure/had no opinion. 35 parent/carers did not support proposals to amend the age range, having concerns to be addressed over several themes:

- Concern over transition arrangements and anxiety over disruption caused by the re-location of pupils between Silverwood campuses;
- Perceived limitation of choice of secondary age provision;
- Concerns over extended travel times and suitability of transportation plans;
- Specific concerns for students with PMLD needs (including whether they will be able to access all the specialist facilities offered at Rowde campus; concern they will be educated and supported by new, unfamiliar staff; and access to health care and support, especially in emergency situations);
- Concerns that children and young people will not access their local communities for life skills – and they will not be visible to local communities if educated at Rowde campus; and
- Impact on individual children.

34. Silverwood School Senior Leadership Team fully considered the feedback from students, staff and parents – the majority of whom support the proposals. They have fully considered the feedback received from the consultation and endeavour to address the concerns raised by families. Detailed responses to concerns are presented in Appendix A. Silverwood School believe the benefits of enjoying a comprehensive and varied curriculum – together with peers - in state-of-the-art facilities at Rowde campus, offers the best secondary education experience for their students.

35. Although the overall number of concerns was low, there were concerns on the transition arrangements. It is acknowledged that children with SEND experience change anxiety. Silverwood SLT have committed that ‘their pupils will remain at the centre of everything we do.’ They recognise that any change to a well-developed routine could have an impact on a child and commit to *‘carefully thought out and developed transition plans, which will be prepared and discussed with parent/carers, teachers, and of course the child themselves.’*

36. Transport concerns were also raised by parent/carers. Whilst it is acknowledged that the journey times to Rowde may be longer than travel to the other campuses for some pupils, journey times will be reduced for some. There is the commitment that Silverwood School and Passenger Transport Unit will work with parent/carers on travel plans to meet the individual needs of their child. Additional vehicles, drivers and passenger assistants are being secured and journey times to and from school will be minimised.

Feedback from children and young people

37. It is important to capture the views and aspirations of Silverwood students. Back in 2019, students were asked what they wanted from their new school. The children and young people reported that they like their staff and want to build on these positive relationships. They want to be part of their localities and integrate with their peers and wider public. In 2023 the Silverwood Student Council re-iterated these themes. They also added that it was important to invest in a 3-campus solution as *‘if we were all on one campus we could be too clumped together. If we are spread over three schools, it would*

be less'. Also, 'different children have different needs and need different things so should go to three different schools' and 'Making room for new friends is good'.

38. The opportunity to integrate with their peers is important to children and young people. This is a key driver behind Silverwood School's desire to educate secondary-aged pupils together, at Rowde.

39. Silverwood students have been engaged in the detailed design of the new building at Rowde and recognise that 'older children should go to Rowde as there are good opportunities there'. There has been a lot of engagement and excitement amongst pupils for the development of Silverwood School.

40. In 2019, some Silverwood students expressed their dislike of travel arrangements. Whilst long school days have a negative impact on pupils, other pupils previously reported they liked their journey to school and would like to see breakfast clubs and after school clubs to extend their day. Facilities at Rowde offer a wide range of facilities to enhance the school day.

41. The design of Rowde new build simplifies pick up and drop off processes. The proposed reduction in pupil numbers at Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses will also help alleviate pick up and drop off times.

Estimated Capital Work and timeframes

42. Chippenham campus requires minimal infrastructure work and therefore the proposed alterations are mostly cosmetic. The remodelled campus has the capacity to serve 75 learners. It is proposed the building will be re-decorated throughout; new furniture and fittings will be purchased to ensure parity and equity across the Silverwood learning environments. The building will be subject to a 'light touch' refurbishment, the bulk of which can be undertaken in school holidays. The refurbishment plan is representing both value and speed with minimal impact on the school, learners, and their families.

43. The Trowbridge campus requires substantial refurbishment to provide a quality learning environment for 75 children. Trowbridge works will involve the demolition and removal of old mobile classrooms; investment in enhanced mechanical and electrical infrastructure; remodelling and complete refurbishment of interior and exterior spaces. Although the Trowbridge refurbishment will consume most of the Phase 5 funding, Silverwood School are keen to preserve the Trowbridge campus as it serves an area of demand for special school places in Wiltshire. There is confidence that the educational offer and outcomes will increase when capacity is reduced to a more sustainable level.

44. Due to the substantial refurbishment works at Trowbridge, if the proposed changes are accepted, there will be disruption to learning whilst refurbishment is underway. The main refurbishment will need to be scheduled after April 2024, once the planned remodelling at Silverwood Rowde is complete. Students may need to be temporarily placed at neighbouring sites or Rowde campus to enable the refurbishment of Trowbridge. Silverwood Senior Leadership Team will plan this temporary arrangement carefully and will minimise disruption.

45. Both Chippenham and Trowbridge proposals satisfy the wider Silverwood programme aims of delivering attractive buildings – offering safe, friendly, calm, and engaging places to learn. Classrooms will be accompanied by comparable facilities and support to that of Rowde, including: a hydro-pool, sensory rooms, therapy rooms and open outdoor space. Approval for Chippenham and Trowbridge refurbishment enables the planned closure of

the temporary Silverwood satellite provision at Bellefield and Longmeadow when the new build at Rowde is complete in autumn 2023. Silverwood School Senior Leadership Team support the closure of the temporary Bellefield and Longmeadow satellites, as they present a significant challenge for management capacity and the facilities do not offer equitable provision with the other elements of the Silverwood School estate.

Financial Impact:

46. An indicative programme budget has been prepared with the input from the Senior Project Manager (Strategic Asset & Facilities Management Team), Footprint Architects and a Turner Townsend quantity surveyor. The indicative cost plan demonstrates that the proposed scheme can be delivered within the £3.6million allocated for Silverwood Phase 5 capital works.

Capital Works Estimate	£M
Chippenham Site	0.250
Trowbridge Site	2.750
Enabling Works	0.100
Fixtures & Fittings	0.250
Contingency	0.250
	3.600

47. The project contingency is 7% of the overall budget and there is the risk of possible cost overruns. However, Silverwood Phase 3 (Rowde new build) and Phase 4 (Main House) unspent contingency may be carried into Phase 5 works. There is also the opportunity to value engineer the project, to remain within the £3.6 million budget.

48. Securing 150 additional special school places for north Wiltshire offers a more cost-effective solution than independent special school placements (ISS) as shown in the table below. Whilst the primary driver behind the proposals is expanding the education offer of Silverwood School and meet the statutory requirement for more special school places, the financial benefits to Wiltshire Council cannot be ignored. The High Needs Block is £34million in deficit. The proposed growth of state funded special school places at Silverwood significantly reduces the financial burden of the alternative - expensive independent special school placements and higher cost transportation packages.

Planned Places - Silverwood Campus Proposal	23-24 Places	24-25 Places	25-26 Places	26-27 Places	27-28 Places	28-29 Places
Estimated learners rising to 150 by September 2028	14	44	74	104	134	150
Sensitivity assumption - 50% avoiding ISS	7	22	37	52	67	75
Planned Cost Avoidance - Silverwood Campus Proposal	23-24 £M	24-25 £M	25-26 £M	26-27 £M	27-28 £M	28-29 £M
Average ISS Place cost	0.059	0.060	0.062	0.063	0.064	0.065
Average Silverwood Place cost	0.022	0.023	0.024	0.025	0.025	0.026
Costs avoided per place	0.037	0.037	0.038	0.038	0.039	0.039
Average transport savings	0.010	0.010	0.010	0.011	0.011	0.011
Cumulative costs avoided						
ISS	0.257	0.818	1.395	1.988	2.596	2.945
Transport	0.070	0.226	0.387	0.555	0.729	0.833

48. It is important to note that the specialist school places form part of the statutory responsibility of the Council funded by dedicated schools grant and these cost-avoidance plans will form part of the council's Best Value proposals. The transport savings offer a cost-avoidance solution to the alternative of Independent Special School placements.

49. Pupil numbers are scheduled to build up over time and thus the full occupancy savings of £2.945m for dedicated schools grant and £0.833m for the local authority revenue account by 2028-29, potentially sooner, pending feasibility work. These reduced costs are inflation linked in the table above and will be recurrent after this timeframe.

50. The decision to invest £3.6m in Phase 5 expansion of Silverwood School was granted in November 2019. This report seeks to update Members with updated needs analysis data and request these funds are re-directed into securing 150 primary phase places in local community areas of Trowbridge and Chippenham. Taking needs analysis and current average costs into account, the proposal to reassign budget to remodelling the Trowbridge and Chippenham campuses of Silverwood represents a strong return on investment (ROI) and significantly better value than continued reliance on the independent sector.

Main Considerations:

51. Primarily, the main consideration is whether the proposal to retain Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses meets the needs of families of children with SEND. Back in November 2019 the Lead Cabinet Member for Children's Services responded to the consultation on the future of Silverwood School and signalled a move away from closing Larkrise and St Nicholas Schools to a three-site solution. The Cabinet Member committed to a further consultation at a later stage in the Silverwood build programme to consider the requirement for sites in the future, based primarily on demand and the views of stakeholders at that time.

52. In 2019 Wiltshire Council set out that the needs and preferences of parents and carers will be key when considering the appropriateness of education pathway through Silverwood school. Whilst Rowde campus has the potential for up to 400 pupils, £3.6 million was allocated to deliver 50 of these in the 'Phase 5' works. In 2019, the decision was open on where and how the 50 places would be delivered. However, it was anticipated that capacity at the Larkrise and St Nicolas sites would be reduced if the sites were to be retained. In 2023, the consultation identified a strong preference to retain and invest in Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses.

53. Following Cabinet approval on 13 December 2022, the formal consultation was launched with Pre-Consultation briefings week commencing 23 January 2023. A 5-week formal consultation ran from 30th January to 5th March 2023. The consultation was widely publicised, including on the school and council websites, notices in the Wiltshire Times and Gazette & Herald, repeated targeted email and letter communications to 430 Silverwood families and communications from Wiltshire Council and partners such as Wiltshire Parent Carers Council.

54. Feedback from the consultation and the Student Council has been instrumental in formulating these proposals to Cabinet. Silverwood School have offered assurance that the concerns of families will be addressed, particularly in relation to the commitments for considered and sensitive transitions for pupils who are required to transition to Rowde campus to complete a secondary school education.

55. There are currently 85 children on roll at Chippenham (excluding 17 Sixth formers). The refurbishment proposal reduces this to 75. There are currently 112 children on roll at Trowbridge and the campus is deemed to be over-crowded. The refurbishment proposal reduces this to 75. Both Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses will meet the Gross Internal Area requirements for classrooms. However, some of the shared communal space and outdoor play areas fall short of the area guidelines contained within BB104, the DfE's guidance for special school design and space. For this reason, the proposal allows funding for joint outdoor spaces with neighbouring schools.

56. In November 2019, Cabinet set out the factors which would determine the future of Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses:

- demand for places forecast at the time of the consultation
- considering the journey experience of all pupils needing specialist education provision
- views of current and future stakeholders and particularly children and young people with SEND and their parent carers; and
- wider development of inclusive education for children and young people with SEND.

57. The response to the Cabinet requirements is set out below:

Consideration	Response
The demand for places forecasted at the time of the consultation	Place planning analysis highlights the 7.2-7.8% year on year growth for special school places across Wiltshire. This proposal will future-proof the Council for many years, meeting the needs of SEND learners. It is anticipated that Primary places across Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses will be fully commissioned within a year of project completion.
Taking into account the experience of all pupils needing specialist education provision	<p>The proposal seeks to expand SEND education, with the development of the local primary offer; followed by a specialist and broader secondary offer at Rowde; with the hybrid option of Sixth Form provision at mainstream or specialist SEND settings.</p> <p>This proposal secures 150 special school places – far more than the 50 originally planned for. 150 children will benefit from specialist education provision, as set out in their Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP).</p> <p>The proposal secures places across 3 geographic areas of Wiltshire and offers 3 sites for primary-aged education.</p>
The views of current and future stakeholders and particularly children and young people with SEND and their parent carers	<p>The views of current and future stakeholders have been gathered as part of the pre-consultation and formal consultation exercises, running from 23 Jan – 5 Mar 2023, as well as feedback from Silverwood Student Council.</p> <p>Feedback is summarised and the Silverwood response offered is set out in Appendix A.</p> <p>Silverwood Student Council is very receptive to proposals to expand the school. Most staff and parents also support the proposals. The 35 parents who have expressed concerns and</p>

	Silverwood are committed to working with families to address the issues that have been raised. It is hoped that the transition and support arrangements will overcome most parental concerns in the fullness of time.
Consideration	Response
The wider development of inclusive education for children and young people with SEND	<p>The SEND & Inclusion service are fully invested in the delivery of the System of Excellence across the county and have an ambitious vision to create a truly integrated and inclusive system of outstanding education for all children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The SEND & Inclusion service have ambitious plans to increase the range and quality of options for learners with SEND.</p> <p>The SEND & Inclusion team have and continue to develop proposals to support the inclusion agenda, including plans to create secondary resource bases for 2023/24; specialist consultancy and training support to mainstream provisions working with children and young people with SEND; and development of other pathways for SEND learners.</p>

58. The final decision on the long-term future of Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses should take account of the views of Silverwood School, its students (represented by the Student Council) and feedback from the formal consultation, which concluded 5th March 2023. There was significant support for retaining (96%) and investing (95%) in Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses from the consultation. The desire to retain the campuses was echoed by Silverwood School Student Council and the Silverwood Senior Leadership team too.

59. The decision also needs to be informed by the increased demand for special school places, which means the Silverwood Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses are no longer large enough to accommodate both primary and secondary provision. The implementation of the proposed investment in the two campuses to provide an enhanced and equitable learning environment is dependent on a reduction in the number of classes and pupils currently at each of the two sites to a maximum of 9 classrooms and 75 pupils. The proposed Silverwood operating model encompasses a full curriculum offer and tailored SEND support – whilst remaining affordable, deliverable, safe and sustainable to Silverwood School. Cabinet will need to take account of the consultation feedback, alongside Silverwood Schools’ ability to implement the proposed change based on its staffing, finances, and classroom space to deliver the necessary educational offer across each campus.

Overview and Scrutiny Engagement

60. This proposal to retain and invest in Silverwood School Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses was presented to Corporate Leadership Team (17 April 2023) and Cabinet Liaison (26 April 2023) prior to submission for Cabinet approval.

Decision making

61. This proposal satisfies the obligation upon Wiltshire Council to meet the education needs of SEND learners requiring a special school education, as set out in their EHCPs. The proposal to expand Silverwood School to 400 places was agreed by Cabinet in November 2019. The funding for Phase 5 works (£3.6million) is already assigned to the Silverwood School capital budget.

62. The Cabinet decision of November 2019 established the commitment that proposals to complete the Silverwood School expansion should be subject to consultation. Formal consultation on the proposal to change Silverwood pupil numbers to address over-occupancy, as well as changing Chippenham and Trowbridge to Primary phase campuses took place from 30 January to 5 March 2023.

63. These proposals to Cabinet take account of the formal consultation feedback; alongside the response to concerns raised by parents and carers. The proposals reflect the operating model that can be delivered by Silverwood School with the resources available to it, as well as the view from Silverwood leadership that children will ultimately receive the best secondary education at the Rowde campus.

64. The consultation – and the timing of this report - was scheduled to allow those consulted the time to give fully formed consideration and response; and allow time to reflect consultation feedback into final plans.

65. The proposal in this report offers an affordable plan to meet the need for additional special school places and the completed consultation fully satisfies the commitments made by cabinet in November 2019 and December 2022

66. 'Prescribed Changes' regulations require Cabinet to decide on proposals within two months of the end of the consultation, i.e. by 5th May 2023.

Safeguarding Implications

67. There are no safeguarding implications arising from this proposal. Children and young people with SEND will continue to have their educational needs met within approved schools and settings.

Public Health Implications

68. The provision of education, especially in a SEND context, positively contributes to population health and wellbeing. Access to high quality education plays a vital role in providing the foundations needed to ensure that all children have the best start in life, giving them the ability to learn and understand about health and wellbeing and have the opportunity to live healthier lives.

Procurement Implications

69. The proposed refurbishment of Silverwood Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses will be subject to approved, established procurement practices followed by Wiltshire Council Estates Team for high value procurements. This will include the use of building frameworks.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

70. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) was prepared for the original proposal in 2019. It has been revisited and updated as part of the development of these current proposals and is presented in Appendix B. The EIA has shaped and informed the proposals and will continue to be a process that will support secure decision making. The consultation has been extensive and inclusive, and every attempt has been made to get the views of interested parties.

71. Cabinet is required to pay due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, however, it is not always possible to mitigate all negative impacts of a decision on a particular group. This report and the subsequent recommendations seek to decrease or eliminate any disadvantage for any children or family involved. The proposal for Silverwood School, delivered across three campuses and meeting differentiated learning needs, positively seeks to offer greater access and diversity of curriculum and support in a world class learning environment.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

72. The proposed refurbishment of Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses include an investment in the mechanical and electrical infrastructure of the school sites. It is anticipated that the climate and environmental impact will be improved. We will explore all funding opportunities to improve energy efficiency of the building and ways to fund renewable energy, as part of the mechanical and electrical design work.

Workforce Implications

73. The proposed change in student numbers at Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses will result in the redeployment of some teaching and support staff across Silverwood sites. Silverwood leadership team will commence the management of change process, with support from Wiltshire Council HR, if the necessary Cabinet approvals have been granted. Silverwood School employees who may be affected by these proposals have received briefings and attended information sessions.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken

74. If the proposal to change the numbers and the age profile of Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses is not accepted, there is the risk that Silverwood School continues to be over-subscribed. In practice, this means the school would not be able to accept new children - so all reception-aged children and transfers in would have to go to Rowde (space permitting). It would also mean the campuses could not be upgraded, leading to a two-tier quality of provision compared to Rowde campus. The resulting model would not make good use of resources and is not supported by Silverwood leadership.

75. If the Phase 5 expansion plan is delayed until suitable alternatives are found, Wiltshire Council needs to identify an alternative solution to meet the 7.2-7.8% year on year growth in demand for special school places - and there is already a deficit in special school places. In practice, this would mean children are placed in expensive ISS provision.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks

76. In 2019 there was parental opposition to proposals to close Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses, which resulted in a judicial review. In 2023, some parents oppose

proposals to change the age range at these campuses. Although it is accepted that some families believe they are adversely affected by the proposals, there is confidence that processes have been followed to ensure decision making is lawful, consistent and has regard to all relevant, and only relevant, considerations.

77. There are a small number of families who believe they are adversely affected by proposals. Silverwood School have made a commitment to working with individual families to develop thorough, considered, sensitive transition plans. There is the risk, however, that proposals will generate adverse publicity and social media commentary. In anticipation, Wiltshire Council and Silverwood School have developed a joint communications plan.

78. It should be recognised that the proposals offer a holistic solution to the development of Silverwood School operating model – and therefore cannot be considered individually. The inter-dependence of proposals means that retention and investment in Chippenham and Trowbridge is predicated on a growth in Silverwood registered places. Also, investment in the Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses requires a reduction in classrooms – and therefore a change in age range – if it is to address overcrowding issues. To accept some proposals and reject others would require a re-working of the operating model, a new consultation and a delayed decision. In the meantime, Silverwood Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses would continue to be overcrowded and full, and would not have capacity to accept new pupils including their annual reception age intake.

79. If approved, the programme team will work with Silverwood leadership team to develop plans to minimise disruption and re-assure families.

80. The refurbishment of existing buildings means there will be design compromises and derogations from DfE space standards, particularly with access to outdoor recreation space at Trowbridge. The derogations from BB104 have already been discussed with Silverwood and accepted. Proposals for shared facilities with neighbouring schools have been discussed and agreed in principle.

81. Silverwood employees have already experienced considerable change – and this proposal extends the period of change through to 2024/25. This proposal has been drawn up by the Silverwood Senior Leadership Team, thereby ensuring there is sufficient time and management capacity to manage growth of the schools; the disruption during the refurbishment; the relocation of existing employees and recruitment of additional staff; and the closure of satellites.

82. If approved, the retention of Trowbridge and Chippenham campuses creates local special Primary school campuses and will ultimately reduce school transport times for primary children. However, the transportation of children to and from school will be disrupted during the Phase 5 works. The programme team will work with Transport Services to ensure the changes can be modelled through and optimised routes scheduled.

83. The proposal to increase registered places and amend provision between Silverwood campuses alter school transport routes and schedules. Additional vehicles, drivers and transport assistants are required for safe, effective and efficient school transport. To mitigate risks, Passenger Transport have been involved in the formal consultation exercise and have drawn up plans to address to the challenges that were identified by families.

84. There is the risk that the £3.6 million budget for Phase 5 works is insufficient in the current climate of escalating build costs. However, there is £250k in the cost plan for

contingency. If necessary, the scheme can be value-engineered to mitigate against rising costs and remain affordable.

Financial Implications

85. If Cabinet decide not to retain and invest in Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses, the required number of specialist school places will not be created and more children with highest levels of need will inevitably be placed in independent special schools (ISS.) Securing 150 additional special school places for north Wiltshire offers a more cost-effective solution than independent special school placements (ISS). Assuming an average cost saving of £0.036m per place, per annum. and assuming 75 children are being diverted from ISS to the additional Silverwood provision – resulting in reduced costs of £2.945 million per annum once each site is fully occupied. This forms part of the Councils extensive HNB recovery plan and Best Value response. In addition, it is likely that these places would not be readily available from the ISS market so the council would struggle to meet its statutory duty for SEN school place sufficiency.

86. The SEN school transport is a local authority revenue budget pressure, potential cost savings of £0.010m per pupil per annum are calculated resulting in reduced SEN transport costs of £0.460m per annum once each site is fully occupied. Reduced transport costs are driven by primary phase children who can be educated in or nearer their own communities and all children who can remain in county rather than in specialist independent sector places which are often outside the county borders. Once the sites are occupied these savings will be quantified and added to the Councils MTFs.

87. The decision to invest £3.6m in Phase 5 expansion of Silverwood School was granted in November 2019. The proposal does not require additional capital funding from that already approved.

Legal Implications

88. In December 2022, Cabinet reviewed the pre-consultation proposals and requested the proposals are re-submitted to full Cabinet following conclusion of the formal consultation.

89. Proposals to change pupil numbers across the different campuses and the re-designation of Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses through a change in the age range required formal consultation in accordance with the relevant statutory guidance.¹ This requirement was noted in the cabinet decision 19 November 2019 and 13 December 2022.

90. The statutory guidance includes specific guidance for decision-makers in making a decision. This is reproduced below.

91. Decision-makers will need to be satisfied that the appropriate fair and open local consultation and/or representation period has been carried out and that the proposer has given full consideration to all the responses received. Decision-makers should not simply take account of the numbers of people expressing a particular view. Instead, they should give the greatest weight to responses from those stakeholders likely to be most affected by a proposal – especially students and the parents of children at the affected school(s).

92. Decisions must be made within a period of two months of the end of the representation period, or they must be referred to the Schools Adjudicator. The representation period ended 5 March 2023, therefore Cabinet needs to decide on proposals by 5th May 2023.

93. When issuing a decision, the decision-maker can:

- reject the proposal.
- approve the proposal without modification.
- approve the proposal with modifications, having consulted the LA and/or GB (as appropriate); or
- approve the proposal, with or without modification – subject to certain conditions (such as the granting of planning permission) being met.

94. The decision to delegate decision-making in respect of implementing the proposals and applying the capital budget to the Director of Education & Skills is in accordance with the Delegation of Executive Functions at Part 3 Section C and the Scheme of Sub-Delegation to Officers at Part 3 Section D2 of the Constitution.

Options Considered

95. The development of options for Phase 5 expansion of Silverwood School has been an iterative process, starting from May 2019 report to Cabinet. Originally, it was proposed that Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses would be closed once Rowde campus met the expansion target set out in the original proposal. In November 2019, Cllr Church stated the future of Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses was to be left open, pending further formal consultation at a later stage.

96. Since 2019 there has been the opportunity to undertake more detailed place planning work to understand demand for special school places. In addition, the new leadership team at Silverwood had the opportunity to evaluate their operating model and have shaped the proposals for change. There has also been the opportunity to reflect on feedback from the 2019 consultation and develop options.

97. Silverwood School led the 2023 formal consultation exercise. They hosted the live consultation events and have considered every consultation response. The Leadership Team have developed responses to concerns to the proposals and have undertaken to address individual, specific concerns for families who feel their children are adversely affected by proposals.

98. The proposals presented to Cabinet in December 2022 and May 2023 represent the wishes of Silverwood School to:

- Invest and Retain in Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses (the Proposal):* The 2019 and 2023 consultations identified strong support to offer special school provision and therefore retain and invest in Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses as part of the Silverwood School offer.
- Alternative options – ‘Do Nothing’ or ‘Dispose of Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses’* are not supported by Silverwood School. The campuses are over-capacity and do not satisfy DfE space standards BB104. Over-capacity issues mean it is difficult to find ‘break out’ teaching or therapy spaces. More significantly, learners cannot access quality outdoor recreational space under current arrangements. Silverwood School oppose the ‘Do nothing’ option.

- iii. Equally, there is no support for a proposal to *'Dispose of Chippenham and Trowbridge sites and replace with new schools'*: capital receipts are expected to generate <£1million per site. It is estimated that it would cost at least £10 million to acquire special school places on alternate sites. This is unaffordable and undeliverable.
- iv. Silverwood School do not support an option to *Develop Phase 5 provision at Silverwood Rowde* as there are already plans to develop the existing estate (the Main House and Orchard Block) as part of Silverwood School Phase 4 investments. Any further growth on the Rowde site would need to be a new build – and is therefore deemed cost prohibitive at this stage and likely to exceed capacity at the site. Further building at the Rowde site, as an alternative to retaining and investing Silverwood Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses, reduces Silverwood's geographic coverage of Wiltshire.

Conclusions

99. This proposal satisfies the obligation upon Wiltshire Council to meet the education needs of a growing number of SEND learners requiring a special school education. The proposal to expand Silverwood School at Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses - by securing 150 high quality places – responds to feedback from the 2019 and 2023 consultation exercise. It offers an affordable and sustainable solution to SEND learners in north Wiltshire and is fully endorsed by Silverwood leadership team.

100. Whilst there was a mixed response to plans to amend the age profile of learners at Chippenham and Trowbridge, Silverwood School is confident they can address the concerns of the majority of families through thoughtful, sensitive, child-focused transition plans.

Lead Director: Lucy Townsend, Corporate Director People, Director of Children's Services

Report Author: Melissa Hardwell, Head of Special School Transformation,
melissa.hardwell@wiltshire.gov.uk

17 April 2023

Appendix A - Silverwood Chippenham and Trowbridge Formal Consultation

Pre-Consultation

Prior to the formal consultation period, in accordance with DfE guidance for good practice, pre-consultation information sessions were held on 24/1/2023 (online via Microsoft Teams) and on 26/1/2023 (face-to-face at Silverwood Rowde campus). The sessions were promoted to all Silverwood School parents/ carers, staff, and governors.

To minimise barriers to attending the online session, no registration was required and the link to the session was included in the communications, including reminders. The online session was a 'Live Event' format which meant it would be suitable for any number of attendees and could be recorded. The recording of the session, [Silverwood Information Session](#), was then published on the school and council websites and sent to every Silverwood family to maximise reach. The face-to-face session did require booking via email or telephone so we could know numbers and prepare suitable space.

The online session included a presentation from Silverwood School Executive Headteacher Sean McKeown followed by a facilitated questions and answers sessions via the chat box. The face-to-face session included the same presentation, followed by a questions and answers two-way discussion. The two sessions were delivered together between the council and the school.

The online session had eleven anonymous attendees and the face-to-face session had seven parent carer attendees:

- 4 parent carers of pupils at Silverwood, Trowbridge
- 1 parent carer of a pupil at Silverwood, Chippenham
- 2 parent carers of a children who attends mainstream school, 1 of whom accesses the Silverwood 'Plus Programme'

Themes from the questions and answers sessions from the pre-consultation information sessions included:

- Positivity about the proposal to retain the Trowbridge and Chippenham campuses
- The need for investment at the Trowbridge and Chippenham campuses
- Some pupils would find a transition to Rowde difficult
- Meeting complex medical needs
- Questions about transport and drop-off
- Some pupils could find a large school environment overwhelming
- Reduced choice for secondary provision (three campuses moving to one)
- Some parents had chosen the school for their child expecting them to be able to spend their whole school life based at that campus

Attendees were also asked about the preferred format for the consultation sessions. Feedback included:

- Both face to face and online
- At both Silverwood Chippenham campus and Silverwood Trowbridge campus

Publication

The statutory notice and consultation documents were widely distributed, including by email/ letter to all Silverwood parent carers, staff and governors, and via Wiltshire Parent Carer Council (WPCC) to the wider SEND community (WPCC membership is over 4000). They were also sent to each local authority with pupils at Silverwood School. The documents were hosted on the school website and on the council website including the Local Offer. The notice was published in the local press, in the Wiltshire Times and the Gazette & Herald, and at the entrances/ notice boards of each school campus.

Representation (Formal Consultation)

The representation period ran from 30/1/2023 – 5/3/2023. The statutory guidance required a 4-week representation period but the council and school agreed to run it for 5 weeks as it straddled half term and to maximise opportunities for people to participate. The proposal documentation and communications invited participation in the consultation via face-face sessions, an online session, via post, email and an online survey. The consultation sessions were delivered together between Silverwood (Executive Head Teacher and Director of Learning) and Wiltshire Council (SEND Place Planning Commissioning Lead and Head of Passenger Transport Unit).

Date	Venue	Attendance	Additional Info.
20/3/2023	Silverwood, Trowbridge	5 parent carers 1 Silverwood teacher of pupils with PMLD, and 1 Silverwood senior leader with oversight of interventions and therapies joined the session to help answer questions.	This additional session was added to the consultation programme for parent carers of children with children with PMLD, as requested by two parents.
22/3/2023	Silverwood, Trowbridge	3 parent carers	
22/3/2023	Online	5 parent carers (including 1 member of staff) and 1 manager of Stepping Stones District Specialist Centre (SEND early years setting)	
24/3/2023	Silverwood Chippenham	4 parent carers	

The online survey was the most used method of participation, with 141 responses during the representation period. Four email responses were received and no responses via post.

Online Survey Responses

	Responses	%
Parent carer	77	55
Staff	53	38
Other	11	8
Total	141	100

Question	Yes	No	Not Sure
Do you agree with the proposal to retain the Silverwood Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses?	96%	2%	2%
Do you agree with the proposal for Wiltshire Council to invest to upgrade the Silverwood Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses?	95%	2%	3%
Do you agree with the proposal for a change in age range at Silverwood Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses to primary, age 4-11 (Reception – Year 6) from September 2023?	51%	30%	18%

Do you agree with the proposal to change Silverwood School's registered place number from 410 to 460 from September 2023?	65%	9%	26%
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The proposals to retain and invest to upgrade the Silverwood Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses had very strong support with 96% and 95% responding 'Yes' respectively.

The proposal to change the age range at the two campuses had a more mixed response with 51% responding 'Yes' and 30% responding 'No'.

There was support for the proposal to increase the Silverwood School registered place number with 65% responding 'Yes' and 9% responding 'No'.

Online Survey Response Comments and Consideration of the Comments

For each of the mandatory four Yes/No/Not Sure questions, the survey gave the opportunity to provide a comment in a free text box. The survey also gave the opportunity to answer in free text boxes to the questions:

- Are there any other comments you would like to make in relation to any of the questions above?
- Are there any other options you think should be explored?

62% of the survey responses provided a comment to at least one of these six optional free text box questions. The comments to each of these six questions have been analysed and for each the most commonly occurring themes have been listed below. These themes are also representative of the comments and concerns raised in the consultation sessions and email responses.

Do you agree with the proposal to retain the Silverwood Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses?

Theme	Comments	How have Silverwood School and the council considered these comments?
Retaining the sites is positive – better local provision/ link to the community	17	Agree that retaining sites is important to meet the growing demand for SEND places across Wiltshire.
Retaining the sites is positive because of the demand for places	10	We fully agree

Do you agree with the proposal for Wiltshire Council to invest to upgrade the Silverwood Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses?

Theme	Comments	How have Silverwood School and the council considered these comments?
Upgrading the sites is positive – the campuses need updating/ improve the learning environment	19	We agree that this is an important step, which will offer parity of environmental factors for our pupils, and ensure they have the best learning experience. Space standards are a real concern with noticeable overcrowding on Chippenham and Trowbridge sites.

Do you agree with the proposal for a change in age range at Silverwood Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses to primary, age 4-11 (Reception – Year 6) from September 2023?

Theme	Comments	How have Silverwood School and the council considered these comments?
Concern - Transition/ Disruption	15	The school will work with teachers, parent/carers, and the pupil themselves to agree a suitable transition plan that works for everyone, reviewing the plan during the transition period if needed. Individual pupil needs will absolutely be centre to the plan in place, and will be flexed accordingly in consultation.
Concern - Choice	14	<p>The school recognises that focussing Chippenham and Trowbridge campus sites on early years and primary reduces choice to parents and carers of secondary age pupils, however, these sites are not big enough to continue to support both primary and secondary provision due to the increased demand for places.</p> <p>The school wishes to provide an excellent learning environment for all Silverwood pupils, with appropriate space standards and age-related equipment and learning materials. This cannot easily be achieved by retaining secondary provision at Chippenham and Trowbridge, but the new build at Rowde will offer fantastic, needs-based learning environment with state-of-the-art equipment to support all pupils irrespective of their individual need.</p> <p>The proposal to invest in the Chippenham and Trowbridge sites will offer choice to families of reception and primary age pupils. The Rowde campus will also offers reception and primary provision.</p>
Concern – Travel/ Transport	13	Passenger Transport Unit will work with parent/carers on travel plans to meet the individual needs of their child. Additional vehicles, drives and passenger assistants are being secured and journey times to and from school will be minimised.
Concern – PMLD Needs/ Access to Health Services	9	<p>Pupils with PMLD are specifically provided for within the design of the new build and the state-of-the-art equipment provided. Plans were co-created with PMLD pupils and parents as part of the school design.</p> <p>Well-developed transition plans, with pupils at the heart of the plan, will ensure that pupils transition well to Rowde campus.</p> <p>The school is confident that pupils at the Rowde campus will have good access to healthcare services.</p>
Concern – Access to the Local Community	7	Teachers offer, as part of the curriculum, a range of trips and community visits, to ensure that pupils experience their local communities and benefit from a range of developmental life skill opportunities; this includes visits to a number of communities within the county including

		Chippenham and Trowbridge. Pupils will continue to have access to minibuses for planned trips.
Concern – Impact to Child	5	Silverwood pupils will remain at the centre of everything we do. We recognise that any change to a well-developed routine could have an impact on a child; carefully thought out and developed transition plans will be prepared and discussed with parent/carers, teachers, and of course the child themselves.

Do you agree with the proposal to change Silverwood School's registered place number from 410 to 460 from September 2023?

Theme	Comments	How have Silverwood School and the council considered these comments?
There is an increased need for places	18	We agree this is an important consideration if we are to meet the growing SEND place demand
Additional places will require increased staffing and resources	10	We recognise the need to increase staffing and resources to meet the increased demand and this is built into school budget. Silverwood will receive additional pupil funding for any increase in pupil numbers.

Are there any other comments you would like to make in relation to any of the questions above?

Theme	Comments	How have Silverwood School and the council considered these comments?
Concern – Access to Local Community	6	Teachers offer, as part of the curriculum, a range of trips and community visits, to ensure that pupils experience their local communities and benefit from a range of developmental life skill opportunities; this includes visits to a number of communities within the county including Chippenham and Trowbridge. Pupils will continue to have access to minibuses for planned trips.
Concern – Choice	5	The proposal to invest in the Chippenham and Trowbridge sites will offer choice to families of reception and primary age pupils. The Rowde campus will also offers reception and primary provision.
Concern – Disruption/ Stress to Child or family	5	Silverwood pupils will remain at the centre of everything we do. We recognise that any change to a well-developed routine could have an impact on a child; carefully thought out and developed transition plans will be prepared and discussed with parent/carers, teachers, and of course the child themselves.

Are there any other options you think should be explored?

Theme	Comments	How have Silverwood School and the council considered these comments?
Option for families to choose to stay at their current campus or	12	The retention of both Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses and their planned refurbishment, relies on a reduction in the current number of classrooms and pupils. The rationale for this is to ensure that current overcrowding can be addressed, that the refurbishment will meet improved space standards for

move to Rowde		pupils, create more outdoor space, providing age-appropriate equipment and learning resources. The Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses are not big enough to continue to support primary and secondary provision because of the increased demand for places.
Theme	Comments	How have Silverwood School and the council considered these comments?
Create additional provision in Trowbridge/ Chippenham to meet local need	7	<p>There is no space within the school to expand provision for Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses. We have become reliant on temporary classrooms or space in other school settings away from main campus sites, to meet urgent need for places; this is not equitable or sustainable long term.</p> <p>Wiltshire Council is working on a range of projects to increase capacity at special schools and resource bases in Wiltshire but there is no current option to expand Silverwood School provision in Trowbridge or Chippenham.</p>
Consider options for 6 th Form	7	Silverwood's 6 th Form College will be retained in Chippenham, with further provision for 6 th Form at the Rowde campus.
Option to retain PMLD provision at all three Silverwood campuses	6	<p>PMLD provision for reception and primary will continue to be supported at both the Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses, and also be provided at the Rowde campus.</p> <p>The new build at Rowde, and the state-of-the-art equipment provided, has been designed to meet the needs of all age groups and for pupils with PMLD. Plans were co-created alongside pupils with PMLD, staff and parents as part of the school design.</p> <p>Well-developed transition plans for all pupils with PMLD, taking careful account of their specific needs, will ensure that pupils transition well to Rowde campus. Where the individual needs of pupils with PMLD require an extended transition, we will work with parents, staff, and other professionals to support that transition.</p> <p>The school wants to give the opportunity for all pupils to have peer groups at their age, including for pupils with PMLD.</p> <p>The school wishes to make best use of all its staff and resources, including for pupils with PMLD, and believe this can be best achieved by focussing all secondary provision, including for pupils with PMLD, at the Rowde campus.</p>

Full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

This proposal requires a full EQIA as there is a risk of significant adverse impact on service users including 'vulnerable groups' and/or and those from certain protected characteristics. An EQIA shows how you have and intend to ensure equalities issues are taken into account in:

1. making key decisions e.g. there are 3 cost saving proposals and you need to agree one
2. implementing an agreed decision e.g. you have agreed the proposals and need take on board the needs of those affected and reduce any negative impact where possible
3. reviewing the outcome of the decision e.g. reviewing the actual impact on people and whether it was successful in achieving savings

This document is a way of recording processes and is a key part of our obligation to show 'due regard'. The document can be updated and shared with decision makers throughout the project to inform which approaches/ ideas etc. are taken forward, how it is implemented and to review its success.

Please append all related:

- **EQIA screenings**
- **Full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)**
- **Equality Impact Assessment Quality Assurance Checklist**
- **Proposals- budget/ practice/ policy**

Officers Involved in completing screening	
Officer completing Equality Impact Assessment: <i>Responsible for gathering the information needed for the forms and completing the forms</i>	Melissa Hardwell
Head of Service or Operational Director authorising Equality Impact Assessment: <i>Responsible for ensuring that equality impact of any proposal has been fully considered</i>	Helean Hughes
Date Equality Impact Assessment completed:	13 April 2023

• **Proposal being Assessed**

Title of Budget Option/ Report: <i>Name of the proposed new or changed legislation, policy, strategy, project, or service being assessed</i>	Proposal to Retain and Invest in Silverwood School Chippenham and Trowbridge Campuses
Service Area and Directorate:	SEND & Inclusion, Education & Skills
Budget Option:	N/A
Budget Reference: <i>Relevant reference if this screening is being used for a formal budget proposal as part of the budget cycle</i>	N/A
Date proposal to be considered at Cabinet (if known):	2 May 2023
Is this a new proposal?	No, this is a development of a Silverwood School proposal that was presented to Cabinet previously in November 2017, November 2018, and November 2019. The proposals were revised and re-submitted to Cabinet (pre consultation) in December 2022 and have been updated following formal consultation for the Cabinet meeting 2 May 2023.
If linked to previous years give details:	Cabinet November 2017, cabinet Report November 2018, cabinet report May 2019, cabinet report November 2019, cabinet report 13 December 2022.
On whom will the policy / decision impact?	X Service users and their families/carers X Staff X Other public-sector organisations X Voluntary / community groups / trade unions <input type="checkbox"/> Others

<p>Brief description of policy / decision to be screened:</p>	<p>On the 22 May 2019, the Cabinet approved the establishment of a new maintained special school (Silverwood School) with a single leadership team for St Nicholas (Silverwood Chippenham), Rowdeford (Silverwood Rowde) and Larkrise (Silverwood Trowbridge) schools. A new school building at Silverwood Rowde will be ready to accept pupils in autumn 2023.</p> <p>In 2019 Cabinet agreed to consult on future proposals for Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses.</p> <p>In December 2022 new proposals for Silverwood School were resented to Cabinet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal to retain Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses • Proposal to invest in Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses to address over-crowding and offer indoor and outdoor facilities that compare with the new campus at Rowde • Proposal to increase the number of official places at Silverwood School from 410 to 460 • Proposal to change the age range at Chippenham and Trowbridge from all through (Reception to Year 11) to primary age (Reception to Year 6). The change is required to reduce over-crowding by reducing the number of classrooms to 9 per site.
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• Reasoning behind the Proposal

Please see the papers being presented to cabinet link:

Cabinet reports of the 13 December 2022:

<https://cms.wiltshire.gov.uk/documents/s209675/Proposal%20to%20retain%20and%20invest%20in%20Silverwood%20School%20Chippenham%20and%20Trowbridge%20campuses.pdf>

The Cabinet report of 13 December 2022 describe the reasoning and information which was used to justify the proposals for changing the education model at Silverwood School, particularly around the education offered by the Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses. The Cabinet meeting of 13 December 2022 decided that proposals needed to be subject to formal consultation (following 'Prescribed Changes regulations') before a decision on Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses is made on 2 May 2023.

The proposal to invest in the refurbishment of Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses is essential if Wiltshire Council is to meet growing demand for special school places. Consultation survey responses were received from 141 people. Silverwood School Student Council were also asked what they thought of the proposals. The responses from the formal consultation and Student Council identified high levels of support for retaining and investing in Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses.

The proposal to increase the number of places at Silverwood School (across all three campuses) received support from two thirds of the survey responses. 65% supported the proposal, 9% were against the proposal, and the remainder were unsure. Silverwood Student Council supported the plans, as it allows more children the opportunity to gain a Silverwood education. Without an increase in registered place numbers, the rationale for retaining and investing in Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses is undermined. Put simply, Silverwood School need to increase place numbers to meet current and future demand; and the planned £3.6 million investment cannot be justified without an increase in place numbers.

To improve Chippenham and Trowbridge learning environments; achieve better compliance with Building Regulation BB104; and address over-crowding, the number of classrooms need to be reduced to 9 classes per site. The reduction in classrooms changes how many children can attend the school. There won't be enough classrooms to educate both primary and secondary aged pupils at the remodelled Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses. For this reason, it is proposed to offer primary education (Reception to Year 6) at Chippenham, Trowbridge and Rowde. It is proposed that secondary age pupils are moved to Rowde campus to continue their education – where there is the full range of facilities to support the more specialist secondary education and children/young people can enjoy an education with their peer group.

The life skills classes syllabus will be developed to ensure children who are educated at Rowde continue to benefit from planned curriculum visits to local shops and communities in Devizes, Chippenham, and Trowbridge – thereby ensuring vital community engagement and visibility is maintained.

The proposed change of age range at Chippenham and Trowbridge generated the greatest level of feedback and opposition in the formal consultation. Just over half of survey respondents were in favour of the age change (51%). However, 45% of parent/carer responses were in opposition to the proposal to change age ranges. Parent/carers had concerns regarding the transition of secondary age learners to Rowde campus over:

- transition/ disruption to education
- reduction of choice of offer
- transport times and arrangements

- perceived (dis)benefit of PMLD provision offer at Rowde
- access to emergency medical care and support.
- visibility, access, and presence of learners within their local communities
- and impact to the individual child (especially from some parents of learners with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD)).

There is the view from some parent/carers that proposals to change Chippenham and Trowbridge to primary school campuses represent a reduction in choice for their children and young people. Although the proposals will restrict choice for some children, Silverwood School feel this change is necessary to retain and invest in Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses - and maximise the number of places for learners with SEND for current and future Silverwood pupils.

Opposition to proposed changes to the age range at Chippenham and Trowbridge presents two areas of significant risk:

- Reputational damage - Where the council does not have full support regarding proposals there is the possibility of reputation damage where the public identifies that the council is not listening to their views.
- Legal challenge – Where stakeholders, including parents and carers, believe that there is sufficient evidence to show that the council:
 - Has not reached a reasonable decision from the information available
 - Has not used the appropriate information
 - Has not followed procedure appropriately

This EIA is now considering the impact of the new proposals for decision making on 2 May 2023. To honour the commitments made in 2019 and December 2022, a full formal consultation was launched on 30 January 2023 and ran for 5 weeks. The consultation was open to the public, but particular – and significant effort - was made to engage with 430 Silverwood pupils and families. The consultation period concluded on 5 March 2023. Silverwood School and the project team have considered all the feedback received and prepared responses to the main areas of concern. Having taken account of all the feedback, the Cabinet report has been updated.

The proposals being put forward to cabinet are as follows:

- I. Cabinet decides on the proposals for the future of the Silverwood School campuses, taking account of: forecast demand for special school places in Wiltshire; the views of current and future stakeholders and, in particular, children and young people with SEND and their parent carers gathered from the formal consultation; together with the Silverwood School Senior Leadership Team proposals for an optimised operating model.
- II. Cabinet approves the change to Silverwood School pupil numbers, increasing registered place numbers from 410 to 460.

- III. Cabinet approves the change in age range on the campuses to deliver the operating model recommended by Silverwood School. The proposed re-design, post refurbishment, results in 9 classrooms per campus. Upon completion of the refurbishment, there will be 75 primary school places (Reception to Year 6) at the Chippenham campus and 75 primary school places (Reception to Year 6) at the Trowbridge campus, accommodated in 9 classrooms per campus.

Throughout the consultation, the proposed change of use of Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses (from all-through to Primary) attracted the strongest parental comments. Although the majority of respondents supported or had no opinion on proposed change to the age range, 35 parent/carer responses were in opposition to the change of age range proposals. However, Silverwood School believe that Rowde becoming the sole campus offering secondary education will achieve the best educational outcomes for all Silverwood students. Also, Silverwood Students – when asked previously – stated a preference to be educated amongst their peers. Everybody recognises that transition between campuses will need to be underpinned by reflective and supportive transition plans.

- IV. Cabinet considers the proposal to retain and refurbish Silverwood School Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses, funded from pre-approved 'Silverwood Phase 5' capital funding.
- V. Decision-making in respect of implementing the proposals in respect of Silverwood School is delegated to the Director of Education & Skills.
- VI. Silverwood Phase 5 capital funds are already approved and delegated to the Director of Education & Skills. It is recommended that the Director can apply the capital funds in the refurbishment and fit out of Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses to deliver equity of provision (in shared spaces, finishes and fittings, furniture, and equipment) with specifications for the new build at Rowde campus. The Director of Education & Skills is authorised to apply some of the Phase 5 delegated budget, if necessary, facilitate works at the nearby schools to Chippenham and Trowbridge campus to support Silverwood students in accessing outdoor recreational and PE space, to better meet space planning standards and more inclusive play opportunities.

That this is achieved by:

- a) Approving the decision to retain and invest in Silverwood Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses.
- b) Completing the statutory processes (under the 'Making Significant Changes (Prescribed Alterations) to Maintained Schools' Guidance), to increase the number of registered places offered by Silverwood School to 460.
- c) Approving the change of age range at Chippenham and Trowbridge to primary age (Reception to Year 6)

d) Noting that children and young people of secondary age will be supported in their transition to Silverwood Rowde.

Results from the screening

Specify which protected characteristics (and groups within) were identified in the screening as at risk of adverse impact

Age	Disability	Race	Religion or belief	Gender
<p>Children and young people are within scope of the proposal from birth to age 25, but specifically school age children/ young people</p>	<p>The proposals will impact on all children and young people with SEND who are educated or will be in a special school in the north of the county and their families. Approximately 12.5% of children have an EHCP or have a SEN Support plan. The proposals will also make changes to the buildings at the Chippenham and Trowbridge sites, to make them more compliant with BB104. The proposals also address overcrowding.</p> <p>The proposals result in children with SEND re-locating from Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses to Rowde campus to complete their secondary education. Transportation</p>	<p>Services and schools, and access to services and schools are not restricted to or by race and ethnicity.</p>	<p>Services and schools and access to services and schools are not restricted to or by religion or belief</p>	<p>Services and schools and access to services and schools are not restricted by gender</p>

	needs will continue to be met by Schools Transport Service.			
Maternity or pregnancy	Transgender	Sexual Orientation	Marriage or Civil Partnership	Socio-economics/ at risk groups
There is no direct relationship to maternity or pregnancy. However, any decisions made about staff will need to take into account appropriate guidance regarding staff currently pregnant or on maternity leave.	Neutral impact	Neutral impact	Neutral impact	There is a higher incidence of SEND amongst children and young people who are in receipt of free school meals therefore both the benefits and risks will impact on this group. The role of parent/can be a stressful one and the decision may increase pressures on families with children with SEND if they are worried about any future changes to their child's education.

- Making Informed Decisions – Useful Data**

The data is given in the cabinet reports and the scrutiny task groups reports.

Data Gathering - Summary

If not clearly identified above briefly summarise how different groups will be affected by the proposal(s):

The proposals will impact on all children and young people with SEND who are educated or will be in a special school in the north of the county (who are named for Silverwood School) and their families. Approximately 12.5% of children have an EHCP or have a SEN Support plan. The proposals will also make changes to the buildings at the Chippenham and Trowbridge sites, to make them more compliant with BB104. The proposals also address overcrowding.

The proposals result in Silverwood School-named children re-locating from Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses to Rowde campus to complete their secondary education. Transportation needs will continue to be met by Schools Transport Service.

Profile:	Are any groups disproportionately impacted by the changes (who, how and why):
Age profile:	<p>Are any age groups disproportionately impacted by the changes (who, how and why):</p> <p>This a proposal which is focused on children and young people who are educated (or named) for Silverwood School. It is proposed that children who currently attend Silverwood Chippenham or Trowbridge campuses will transition to Silverwood Rowde campus to complete their secondary education with their peers (aged 11-19 years old).</p>
Disability profile	<p>Are disabled people or those with certain disabilities disproportionately impacted by the changes (how and why):</p> <p>This proposal is focused on Children/young people with SEND and the plans are designed to improve school provision and wellbeing for children/young people in Silverwood special school. The new build at Silverwood Rowde has been designed in co-production with children with SEND and their families. The campus at Rowde offers world class facilities for children with SEND and offers full compliance with Department for Education building regulations (BB104) for special schools. A full curriculum is being developed to ensure learners with SEND enjoy the full range of specialist facilities within the newly expanded campus (including specialist teaching and therapy rooms; plus hydrotherapy pool; and fully accessible communal and outdoor facilities). In addition, a life skills curriculum which ensures access and visibility to local communities.</p> <p>Key concerns raised in the consultation were that:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some children will have a longer journey – the proposed solution delivers specialist primary education operating across three sites. Transport routes will be carefully planned to manage transport for learners who transition to Rowde to complete their secondary education. Post 16 learners will continue to be offered Silverwood College in Chippenham, together with Silverwood Rowde. • There was limited choice – by retaining all three sites and investing in all three campuses, there will be both the benefit of strong leadership, shared vision and differentiation as needed for each pupil, with economies of scale and opportunities for expanded specialist facilities at the Rowde site.
Race profile:	<p>Are any ethnic groups disproportionately impacted by the changes (how and why):</p> <p>Ethnic groups are not disproportionately impacted</p>
Religion or belief profile:	<p>Are any faith groups disproportionately impacted by the changes (how and why):</p> <p>Faith groups are not disproportionately impacted</p>
Gender profile:	<p>Are male/female residents disproportionately impacted by the changes (how and why):</p> <p>There are no specific impacts related to gender</p>
Maternity or pregnancy:	<p>Are pregnant women or breastfeeding mothers disproportionately impacted by the changes (how and why):</p> <p>There are no specific impacts related to maternity or pregnancy</p>
Transgender profile:	<p>Are transgender residents disproportionately impacted by the changes (how and why):</p> <p>Transgender students are not disproportionately impacted. There will be more gender-neutral toilet and changing facilities in new and refurbished facilities.</p>
Sexual Orientation profile:	<p>Are heterosexual/ gay/ lesbian/ bisexual residents disproportionately impacted by the changes (how and why):</p> <p>Heterosexual/ gay/ lesbian/ bisexual residents are not disproportionately impacted</p>

Marriage or Civil Partnership:	<p>Are people who are married or who have entered into a civil partnership disproportionately impacted by the changes (how and why):</p> <p>People who are married or who have entered into a civil partnership are not disproportionately impacted</p>
Socioeconomics/ at risk groups profile:	<p>Are any groups disproportionately impacted by the changes (how and why):</p> <p>There is consideration that those on minimal wages and lower income may be affected where the travel time is more costly for parents. It is also acknowledged that families with children with SEND may need one of both of the parent/carers to not engage in full-time work in order to support and care for their child. Thus, any changes should take into account the additional financial strain and impact on the wellbeing of the families.</p>
Multiple characteristics:	<p>Are there any groups which may be impacted in a cumulative way due to multiple protected characteristics?</p> <p>Of the Silverwood school-aged population, there is a higher population of males with SEND.</p>

• Making Informed Decisions – Stakeholder Consultation/Engagement

Views From Stakeholder Consultation/ Engagement:

The Consultation Methodology

On 30 January 2023 Wiltshire Council, in partnership with Silverwood School, began formal consultation on proposals. This included:

- Pre consultation discussions/engagement, week commencing 23 January 2023
- Meetings run by Silverwood School for:
 - Parent/carers with children/young people who attend Silverwood School or may attend in future
 - Silverwood Student Council
- 2 additional meetings, primarily aimed at families with children with PMLD, one at Silverwood Chippenham; one at Silverwood Trowbridge
- Online survey accompanied by the timeline for the proposal
- An email address where all longer comments and concerns could be sent
- Multiple reminders to parents/carers of the consultation and survey from Silverwood School

The 2023 consultation online documentation and consultation options were publicised in the local press and Wiltshire Council Local Offer. Wiltshire Parent Carer Council (WPCC) shared information about the consultation and survey on its website and newsletters. Consultation information was also cascaded through District Specialist Centres, in order to attract feedback from prospective families of Silverwood School.

The consultation attracted 141 survey responses, as well as live feedback from face-to-face sessions and 4 email submissions. We would like to extend our thanks for all those that engaged in the consultation for their considered and thoughtful feedback. Responses were received from a range of stakeholders, including parent/carers (55% or 77 respondents); staff (38% or 53 respondents); and other (8%, 11 respondents). 77 Silverwood parent/carers responded.

	Responses (no.)	%
Parent carer	77	55
Staff	53	38
Other	11	8
Total	141	100

Views of Service Users and Other Stakeholders - Summary

Analysis of survey responses

The 141 survey responses are summarised as follows:

Question	Yes	No	Not Sure
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Do you agree with the proposal to retain the Silverwood Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses?	96%	2%	2%
Do you agree with the proposal for Wiltshire Council to invest to upgrade the Silverwood Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses?	95%	2%	3%
Do you agree with the proposal to change Silverwood School's registered place number from 410 to 460 from September 2023?	65%	9%	26%
Do you agree with the proposal for a change in age range at Silverwood Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses to primary, age 4-11 (Reception – Year 6) from September 2023?	51%	30%	18%

There was unequivocal support for proposals to retain Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses, with 96% of respondents in favour of the proposal. The demand for special school places, taken together with the support for the proposal, means the proposal to retain Chippenham and Trowbridge is recommended to Cabinet.

There were high levels of support to invest in Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses (95%), as it was recognised that an investment in the infrastructure and facilities will directly benefit pupils and offer a more equitable environment across the Silverwood School estate. Silverwood Student Council have expressed clear wishes to improve the art, soft play and calm rooms, quiet rooms, grass and nature areas if Cabinet approve the investment.

There was 65% support for an increase in overall registered place numbers. There was widespread recognition of the need to grow special school places to meet rising demand. Whilst only 9% of respondents opposed the growth in numbers, a quarter were unsure. It is hoped that the understanding that budgets and teaching staff increase with the number of places, will reassure those concerned about the capacity to meet the proposed expansion of Silverwood School.

There was 51% support for a change the age range to primary phase at Chippenham and Trowbridge. 30% did not support this and 18% of all respondents were unsure/had no opinion. A higher number of parent/carers (45%, or 35 parents) did not support proposals to amend the age range. Parental concerns were raised over several themes:

- Concern over transition arrangements and anxiety over disruption caused by the re-location of pupils between Silverwood campuses;
- Perceived limitation of choice of secondary age provision;
- Concerns over extended travel times and suitability of transportation plans;

- Specific concerns for students with PMLD needs (including whether they will be able to access all the specialist facilities offered at Rowde campus; concern they will be educated and supported by new, unfamiliar staff; and access to health care and support, especially in emergency situations);
- Concerns that access to children and young people will not access their local communities for life skills – and they will not be visible to local communities if educated at Rowde campus; and
- Various impacts to individual children.

Analysis of the Representation Meetings, Letters and Emails

The Consultation email account received 4 emails of representation from families and their representatives – who all opposed the proposed change to the age range at Chippenham and Trowbridge due to transition, transportation and choice concerns. There were no letters of representation received at the consultation postal address.

The consultation survey responses, together with the email response letters, have been shared in full with Silverwood Senior Leadership Team – who have endeavoured to respond to each category of concern.

The key findings are:

- There is support for retaining Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses
- There is support for investing in Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses
- The majority of respondents support the proposal to change Silverwood School's registered place number from 410 to 460 from September 2023
- A very narrow majority support the proposal for a change in age range at Silverwood Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses to primary, age 4-11 (Reception – Year 6)

Assessment of proposals:

The table below works through these issues identifying a score for the current position or the proposals prior to mitigation, amelioration or modification followed by a score based on accepting, modifying, or rejecting the proposals. These scores relate to the four Areas identified as outcomes for the original project proposal (initiated 2017).

- Sufficiency - the creation of additional places
- Quality –the proposals lead to increased quality (partnerships, physical space, engagement, education)

- Outcomes for pupils – the proposals lead to better outcomes for pupils (health, wellbeing, educational/vocational goals, preparation for adulthood and independent living)
- Financial efficacy – the proposals enable needs to be met within the available funds.

The table below identifies:

- the key issues (listed above),
- comments on the proposal and the mitigation
- Identifies how this should impact on accepting, modifying or reject the proposal.

Proposal	Comment/mitigation	Sufficiency	Quality	Pupil outcomes	Financial efficacy	Accept/Modify/Reject
Retain Silverwood Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses	There are high levels of support to retain these two campuses from parents and Student Council	Y	Y	Y	Y	It is recommended that the Council accept the proposal
Invest in Silverwood Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses	There are high levels of support to invest in these two campuses, from parents and Silverwood Student Council.	Y	Y	Y	Y	It is recommended that the Council accept the proposal and delivers the refurbishment within the allocated £3.6m funding agreement.
Increase in the number of registered students at Silverwood School	There is broad support for increasing the number of registered students at Silverwood School. Student Council feel that more children should be offered the same opportunity of a Silverwood special school education. Silverwood SLT have provided assurance that budgets, teaching and support staff will increase proportionately to the increase in registered number of students, so existing students will not be adversely affected the growth in the school.	Y	Y	Y	Y	It is recommended that the Council accept the proposal

<p>A change in age range at Silverwood Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses to primary, age 4-11 (Reception – Year 6)</p>	<p>There is a small majority in support of the proposal – with parental concerns expressed over transition arrangements, transport plans, community visibility and engagement and perceived negative impact on individual children.</p> <p>Silverwood SLT believe they can address these concerns, through sensitive transition plans, together with pragmatic transport plans.</p> <p>Although there is a perception (from a minority of parents) that these proposals reduce choice, the expansion of Silverwood registered pupil numbers, taken together with the growth in quality school places, increases choice for children and young people with SEND.</p>	<p>Y Y Y Y</p>	<p>It is recommended that the Council accept the proposal.</p>
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• Overall Impact

The impact assessment suggests that actions to be taken by Silverwood School in response to parental concerns, can reduce, but not eliminate the perceived detrimental impact on their children . However, the updated proposals for Silverwood School - whilst not universally supported – secure the future for Silverwood Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses and increase choice and outcomes for learners with SEND.

The assessment of issues and of protected characteristics suggests that overall the proposals can have a significant positive impact for children and young people with SEND in an expanded Silverwood school in terms of:

- Wellbeing
- Progress
- Attainment
- Health
- Community opportunities,

- Inclusion and integration

Silverwood Student Council feel that these proposals extend the education they currently enjoy to 'new friends'. Worries they had at the start of the Silverwood project (2017-2019) have disappeared. For some parents, they will need to see how the transition and transport plans support their children ahead of any transitions between Silverwood school campuses. We hope this will be mitigated by:

- Further opportunities for engagement in the development of the expanded school and centre of excellence
- Good transition plans and investment in support for children, staff, and families
- Increased support and networking with families via the schools, WPCC and SEND team.
- Well-arranged transport and transport plans
- Good planning, co-production, and communication throughout the next phase of the project.

• EQIA Outcome

No change – continue to implementation

The policy is robust and evidence shows no potential for discrimination and all opportunities to advance equality have been taken.

Adjust the policy and continue with implementation

Adjust to remove identified adverse effects and missed opportunities to promote equalities and achievement of outcomes

Stop and remove

Remove or change the policy if the EQIA identifies actual or potential unlawful discrimination.

• **Mitigating Action Plan**

Action	Anticipated Outcome	Lead	Deadline	Actual Outcome	Comments
On-going communication and engagement with key stakeholders	Building of trust, shared appreciation of Silverwood operating model	Melissa Hardwell, Head of Special Schools Transformation and Silverwood SLT	Ongoing. Resuming from May 2023 following Cabinet decision		
Refurbishment project plan	Delivery of refurbished Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses; reduction in overcrowding; minimised disruption through build works	Melissa Hardwell, with support from Estates project lead	Easter 2025		
Carefully considered, sensitive transition plans	Students (and their parents) are fully prepared and confident ahead of a transition between Silverwood campuses	Silverwood School SLT	September 2025		
Development of 'fully considered', efficient transport plans to/ from school.	Students' journeys to and from school are efficient and within Wiltshire Council school transport parameters	Head of Passenger Transport, Wiltshire Council	September 2025		

• **Next Steps**

Are there plans to provide feedback to the groups or people that have been consulted in preparing for this assessment?	There is a full communication plan and information will be fed back to all groups consulted following the cabinet report of the 2 nd May 2023
How is it proposed that the Mitigating Actions Plan will be monitored?	The Director of Childrens' Services will hold oversight and will be reporting to corporate Directors, cabinet members and engaging with members of the scrutiny group.
Has the assessment been included with Cabinet papers?	The assessment will be available to CLT and Cabinet members in support of the cabinet report of 2 nd May 2023.
Has a review date been identified to revisit this assessment to consider if there has been a significant change in circumstances?	A review date will be decided by the Director of Children's Services.

Officers Involved in Completing Screening

Officer completing Equality Impact Assessment	Melissa Hardwell
Date submitted	13/04/2023
Head of Service or Operational Director sign off	I agree with the content and outcome of this Equality Impact Assessment
Date approved by Head of Service or Operational Director	<i>Helean Hughes</i>