Proposal to increase the capacity of
Ivel Valley Community Special School, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire
from 170 to 200

Notice is given in accordance with section 19 (1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the statutory guidance for proposers and decision makers ‘Making significant changes (‘prescribed alterations’) to maintained schools, October 2018’ that Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, Beds SG17 5TQ intends to make a prescribed alteration to Ivel Valley Community Special School, Hitchmead Road, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire SG18 0NL from 1 September 2019.

This consultation invites interested parties to respond to the proposed increase in capacity for Ivel Valley Community Special School.

**Notice date:** Friday 3 May 2019

**School:** Ivel Valley Community Special School, Hitchmead Road, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire SG18 0NL

**Proposer:** School Organisation, Admissions & Capital Planning, Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House, Chicksands, Shefford, Beds, SG17 5TQ

**Description of proposed alteration**

Central Bedfordshire Council proposes to increase the capacity for Ivel Valley Community Special School from 170 to 200 to enable the school to meet the increasing demand for special school places within the area.

**Evidence of demand for proposed alteration versus need, including results of preliminary consultation**

In February 2019, the governing body of Ivel Valley Community Special School launched a consultation regarding a proposal to increase the capacity for the school from 170 to 200.

The consultation ran from 25 February 2019 to 26 March 2019. Stakeholders advised of the consultation included staff, parents and carers of the school, all other...
schools and academies within Central Bedfordshire, the local town council, the local diocese, relevant trade union representatives and local ward members of Central Bedfordshire Council. A press release was issued by the school to the local newspaper.

Two drop-in sessions were held for parents and other stakeholders at the school during the four week consultation. Over the two sessions just 3 members of staff attended.

96 written responses were received; 59 from parents, 30 from employees of Ivel Valley Community Special School and 7 from other stakeholders of the school. 88.5% (85) of respondents agreed with the proposal; comments submitted in support of the proposal included –

- If there are children needing the correct environment of Ivel Valley (or similar) then we must make space.
- I totally agree with the proposal, as it will give the school a financial firm footing for the future. Primarily it will not affect the students with their learning.
- Desperate need for more places for SEND children struggling to cope in mainstream
- Ivel Valley is a fantastic school and I am relieved and grateful my son got a place there. Any child would be very lucky to go there. Any extra pupils that can go there would be brilliant.
- I feel this would really benefit a number of children and enable children’s needs to be met in the most effective way.
- Think increased population is positive thing to support pupils with SEND in local community.

The number of objections received to the proposed increase totaled 11 (11.5%). Concerns were raised regarding class sizes, staffing levels and parking around the site. These have been addressed by the school as below –

- Larger classes will increase pressure on staff.
  - The increase will equate to fewer that one pupil per class and it is not anticipated that many of the additional pupils will require one to one support. The school is limited in the number of additional staff that it can employ due to rising costs and the lack of school funding, which is a nationwide issue across all schools. The additional pupils will bring in more revenue and it is anticipated that the school’s financial future will stabilise.

- The school already feels overcrowded, particularly in Early Years.
  - The Early Years department operates a free-flow play model and has sufficient capacity for the children educated in there. The school has recently added a new classroom to expand teaching space, funded by DfE SEND capital, and has additional SEND capital funding approved in principle to improve the outdoor learning environment for children in Early Years.
Parking is really bad with staff parking on adjacent roads and school buses accessing the school sites.
- It is not anticipated that the increase in pupil numbers will cause additional traffic. The school has a comprehensive Travel Plan which was made available at the consultation sessions. An application has been submitted for yellow lines/road markings to be painted for the access road to the school site which should improve parking and traffic management around Stratton Way and Hitchmead Road.

Based upon the results of the consultation, the governing body of Ivel Valley Community Special School decided to proceed with the proposal and to submit a request to Central Bedfordshire Council to publish a statutory proposal for the change.

Objectives - including how the proposal would increase educational standards and parental choice

The objective of the proposal is to ensure that the council can continue to fulfil its statutory duty to provide sufficient school places for children with special educational needs in Central Bedfordshire.

Central Bedfordshire Council and the Governing Body of Ivel Valley Community Special School have carefully considered the increase of the school’s capacity and believe that it would bring many potential benefits to the school and the local community including –

- Ensuring that local children with special educational needs can attend their local school
- The expanded school would continue to have the same values, ethos and links with the town that currently exist
- An increase would build upon an Ofsted ‘good’ school which is already very much part of the community providing the opportunity for the wider and expanding community to benefit
- An opportunity to continue to raise standards of attainment, building on existing best practice and extending it to more children.

The effect on other educational institutions within the area

There would be no adverse effect on other similar provisions within the area.

Project costs and indication of how these would be met

Central Bedfordshire Council have agreed to fund the additional places from September 2019. There are no additional capital implications to the council arising as a result of the proposal. The school has recently added a new classroom to expand teaching space, funded by DfE SEND capital, and has additional SEND capital funding approved in principle to improve the outdoor learning environment for children in Early Years.
**Education standards and diversity of provision**

Ivel Valley Community Special School is an Ofsted ‘good’ school. The additional places would enable more children to access the specialist provision at the school.

The proposed change would not adversely affect parental choice within the town but would continue to provide a secure and sustainable high quality education for children with special needs.

**School size**

The school operates over three sites; the ‘school’ for pupils aged 3-16 at Hitchmead Road, ‘the college’ for pupils aged 16-19 at The Baulk and a satellite site situated within the grounds of Biggleswade Academy.

A number of the classes on the school’s Biggleswade Academy Satellite Site are under capacity and could accept additional pupils. Extra pupils could also be accommodated at both the school and college site. The school has sufficient infrastructure to accommodate the additional pupils and the additional places would not adversely impact the education of other pupils.

Ivel Valley Community Special School has a capacity of 170 and there are currently 185 children on roll at the school. The maximum number that the school can admit is 187 (110% of its capacity).

In order to admit more than 187 children, the Department for Education requires the school to increase its capacity. For an increase of 10% or 20 pupils (whichever is the smaller number) the school is required to follow the statutory consultation process.

**Proposed admission arrangements**

The admission arrangements for the school will not change. Central Bedfordshire Council’s special educational needs and disabilities team will continue to be the admitting authority for the school.

**National curriculum**

The school would continue to follow the age-appropriate National Curriculum.

**Equal opportunity issues**

There are no planned changes - there would be a continuation of the school’s current policies and procedures to ensure there is no discrimination and to promote equal opportunities and foster good relations.
Community cohesion

This would enhance and improve wider opportunities and experiences within the local community for all families.

Travel and accessibility

The proposed increase in numbers would not affect the number of staff employed by the school and is unlikely to add to the number of vehicles needing access to the school as the additional pupils would be spread over the school's three sites. The school has a comprehensive travel plan and continues to work with Central Bedfordshire Council to mitigate the traffic problems around the Hitchmead Road site.

School premises and playing fields

The additional numbers would be spread across the school’s three sites and would have no adverse effects on the school premises or playing fields.

Proposed stages for implementation

If the change is approved by the council, it is anticipated that it would be implemented from 1 September 2019.

How to respond to this formal consultation

This formal consultation commences on 3 May 2019 and closes on 7 June 2019.

You can have your say via the online form which is available on the council’s website here – http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/council/public-statutory/notices.aspx

Or you can complete the response form on pages 6 and 7 and return it to the FREEPOST address provided at the end of the form.

Both on line responses and completed forms to confirm your support, raise any objections and submit any comments should be returned by 5 pm on 7 June 2019

Following the close of the consultation, the Council’s Executive will be asked to consider the responses received and determine the proposal at the meeting to be held on 20 August 2019.
Q1 Are you responding as: (please select one)
- Parent of child at Ivel Valley Community Special School
- School employee at Ivel Valley Community Special School
- School governor at Ivel Valley Community Special School
- Resident of Biggleswade
- Other
If other, please specify:

Q2 If you are a parent or carer of a child or pupil currently at another school, please tell us which school. (Please write the name of school)

Q3 Do you support the proposal to increase the capacity of Ivel Valley Special School to meet the increasing demand for special school places within the area? (please select one)
- Yes
- No

Q4 Do you have any comments or concerns regarding the proposed expansion?

About You
This section is about you. The following information will help us when considering your opinions and to make sure that we’re getting views of all members of the community. The answers will not be used to identify any individual. You can read more about why we ask these questions on our website.

Q5 Are you: (please select one)
- Male
- Female
Q6  What is your age? (please select one)

- Under 16 yrs
- 16-19 yrs
- 20-29 yrs
- 30-44 yrs
- 45-59 yrs
- 60-64 yrs
- 65-74 yrs
- 75+ yrs

Q7  Do you consider yourself disabled? (please select one)

Under the Equality Act 2010 a person is considered to have a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a sustained and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

- Yes
- No

Q8  To which of these groups do you consider you belong? (please select one)

- White British
- Black or Black British
- Asian or Asian British
- Mixed ethnicity
- Other ethnic group

If other, please specify:

Q9  What is your home or organisation's postcode?

This will only be used for analysis purposes and will not be used to identify you in any way.

Q10 If you would like to receive alerts for any new consultations, please provide your email address below to be added our database, this will not be used or shared in any other capacity:

Thank you.

Please return your completed form by 5pm on Friday 7th June 2019 to:
Freepost RSJS GBBZ SRZT (you do not need a stamp)
Ivel Valley expansion statutory notice
Central Bedfordshire Council
Priory House, Monks Walk
Chicksands, Shefford
SG17 5TQ

Data Protection Act 2018

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