

Changes to SEN Provision

**Consultation on proposals to increase school places
in Essex for September 2019**

February/ March 2017



Essex County Council

Introduction

The County Council must ensure that there is a school place every year for each child in Essex.

Some of our children have special educational needs and require specialist provision to meet those needs. The County Council is committed to providing the best education for all resident children which includes our commitment to improving the life chances of our most vulnerable children and young people.

The proposals set out in this consultation document are part of a wider programme to provide additional places and improve provision for children with special needs to ensure they can access the type of specialist provision they require within a reasonable travelling distance from their homes and achieve their full potential to become contributing and involved citizens in the future.

I invite you to let me have your views on these proposals so that I can take these into account when I take a final decision.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ray Gooding', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Ray Gooding
Cabinet Member for Education & Lifelong Learning

Background

Essex County Council has a legal duty to provide sufficient school places for resident children who want a school place. The Council periodically reviews the number of school places required and it is evident that additional places need to be established for children who have special educational needs and or a disability.

Careful consideration has been given to the type of provision and the geographical areas where the places are needed.

In addition, the Council is concerned that there are currently some children who have been placed in schools a distance from home or even outside the County because an appropriate type of school place was not available in close proximity to their home. The Council hopes that by increasing the number of places and the range of provision available that fewer children will have to be placed in schools outside their local community in future.

Essex County Council is committed to excellence in education for all children in the County and is proud of the fact that all special schools in Essex are good or outstanding. It is the Council's intention that the new special school provision will deliver the highest standard of accommodation and education.

The proposals set out in this document are part of a wider programme of special school expansion and improvement, some of which is already in place. Autism Support Centres have been established in eight Essex primary and secondary schools to meet the needs of mainstream learning ability children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

The Council has encouraged and supported applications from Free School sponsors to provide additional special school places specifically for pupils with autism and two applications for new Special Free Schools for autistic children are currently being considered by the Department for Education.

The Way Forward

Summary of Proposals

School	Proposal	Current Admission Number	Admission Number if proposals go ahead	Building Work Required	Other Comments
Lexden Springs School Halstead Road Colchester CO3 9AB	To add 50 places 30 of which are boarding places	150 Day Places	200 Places including 30 Boarding places	Yes. Moving to an alternative site which is 1 mile away from the current site. Winstree Road Stanway Colchester CO3 0QE	This is a 3 to 19 school for children with severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties and, ASD.
Glenwood School Rushbottom Lane New Thundersley Benfleet SS7 4LW	The introduction of boarding for 20 pupils	150 now and 210 places from September 2017	210 Places including 20 boarding places (boarding places from 2019)	Yes. Please note that the increase in the number of children to be accommodated is due to expansion previously approved and currently under construction.	This is a 3 to 19 school for children with severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties and, ASD
Oak View School Whitehills Road Loughton IG10 1TS	To add 24 places for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder	85 places	109 Day places	Yes, additional accommodation will be built on the existing site	This is a 3 to 19 school for children with ASD, moderate or severe learning difficulties

Detailed Proposals

Lexden Springs School

Lexden Springs is a 3 to 19 special school catering for the needs of children with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties, Autistic Spectrum Disorder and, Severe Learning Difficulties.

Change of site

The Council is proposing to move Lexden Springs School from its current site at Halstead Road, Colchester, CO3 9AB and build new and better accommodation for the school at Winstree Road, Stanway, Colchester, CO3 0QE. The new site is one mile from the existing site.

Closure of existing site

The existing school at Halstead Road will therefore close when the school opens in the new building in Winstree Road.

Expansion

The new site will accommodate a larger number of students and therefore the new school will increase in size from 150 day places to 170 day places. This includes an increase in day places for children with multiple and complex needs.

Boarding Places

In addition, 30 boarding places will be created at the school. The boarding provision is for Monday to Thursday during term time only and students will return to their families or other provision at weekends and during the school holidays. The boarding accommodation is only available to students on the roll of Lexden Springs School.

Completion Date

The new school building is expected to be fully open in 2019.

Glenwood School

Glenwood School is situated at Rushbottom Lane, New Thundersley, Benfleet, SS7 4LW and currently provides education for 150 children and young people with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties, including those with Autistic Spectrum Disorder, aged 3 to 19 years. The school is currently being rebuilt as part of separate, previously approved,

proposals on a site adjacent to the existing school. When the previously approved expansion is complete the school will provide 210 places. This new proposal will introduce boarding for 20 students.

Site

Glenwood School is currently being rebuilt as part of separate, previously approved, proposals on a site adjacent to the existing school. When the new building is completed the existing school buildings will be demolished to make way for the boarding accommodation for 20 children and young people. The boarding accommodation will therefore be on the existing school site.

Boarding Places

The proposal is to provide 20 Monday to Thursday boarding places at the school. The boarding provision is for term time only and the young people will return to their families or other provision during the weekends and school holidays. The boarding accommodation is only available to young people on the roll of Glenwood School. If the proposal is accepted and the work is complete the school will provide 210 places including 20 boarding places.

Completion Date

The boarding places are expected to open in September 2019.

Oak View Special School

Oak View Special School is situated at Whitehills Road, Loughton, IG10 1TS and provides education for 3 to 19 years children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder, SLD and PMLD.

Expansion

The proposal is to expand the school on the existing site by adding an additional 24 places for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. The school will increase in size from 85 places to 109 places.

Completion Date

We expect the new places to be available in September 2019.

Questions and Answers

How does the Council forecast future demand for school places?

The Council considers all the information it has on the pupils already attending schools in Essex. It also examines the birth rate and takes into account the likely number of children moving into newly constructed dwellings and historical trends in migration. This predicts the number of children to be provided for in Essex. The Council is aware that a certain proportion of those children will have a special educational need or disability.

ECC is aware from our schools the type of need they are identifying among their pupils. Most pupils with special needs and disabilities have their needs met in mainstream schools. Some children require more specialist provision and they are assessed for an Education Health and Care Plan. It is these children who may need a place in a special school.

How were these schools selected for expansion?

These schools are part of a wider programme of expansion and improvement of special educational needs provision. The programme includes an aspiration to provide additional places via new special free schools. There are two proposals under consideration by the Department of Education at present.

In addition, the Council has provided specially resourced provision in a number of primary and secondary schools for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder and is carrying out feasibility studies for further provision in mainstream schools for children and young people with social, emotional or mental health problems.

The schools, which are the subject of this consultation, were selected because they are good schools and are in the right geographical area to meet the needs identified.

How and when can we comment on the designs for the building projects?

All building projects require planning permission to be granted. As part of this process the planning applications will be available for anyone to comment on. Each school will bring the planning consultation to the attention of parents/carers.

How will the schools remain operational and continue to provide high quality education during the building work?

This is not a problem for either Lexden Springs School or Glenwood School as the work is happening off site and therefore does not affect the running of the existing school.

The Council has considerable experience of managing building projects on school sites and ensures that any contractor appointed is fully aware of all of the difficulties associated with construction on a school site. This is particularly important for special

schools where the children may be particularly vulnerable. The Council expects the contractor to ensure proper separation between the operational school and the construction work. Many strategies are employed on school sites such as ensuring that heavy work is done during school holidays and ensuring that deliveries are made outside of arrival and departure times.

How can I apply for a place at one of the above schools?

Admission to the new school places is achieved by having the school named on your child's Education Health and Care Plan or Statement of Special Educational Needs as part of the statutory assessment process.

Will the school change its uniform or school day as part of the expansion?

The Council is not aware that any of the schools wish to change the school uniform or start or finish the school day at a different time. However, those decisions are for the governing body of each school.

How Can You Make Your Views Known?

The County Council is seeking the views of all interested persons about the proposals. A number of public meetings have been arranged at the schools to provide an opportunity for parents and members of the local community to ask questions and comment on the proposals.

The public meetings will take place as follows:

Schools	Venue	Date	Time
Lexden Springs School	Lexden Springs School	9 th March 2017	3.30pm to 5.30pm
Glenwood School	Glenwood School	7 th March 2017	3.30pm to 5.30pm
Oak View School	Oak View School	8 th March 2017	2.30pm to 4.30pm

At this stage no decision has been made on the proposals and all the views received will be considered prior to a decision being taken as to whether to go ahead with the proposals. Final decisions will need to be taken in the context of the significant and growing need for more special school places in Essex.

Your Comments

The consultation period runs from Monday 20th February 2017 to Friday 31st March 2017. You are invited to respond to this consultation using the following electronic survey form:

<http://tinyurl.com/SEN-Questionnaire>

You may also send feedback and comments to:

Ralph Holloway
ralph.holloway@essex.gov.uk

Transformation of SEN Services Manager
Essex County Council
County Hall E2 Zone 1
Market Road
Chelmsford
CM1 1GS

You are also welcome to drop any letters into the schools by Friday 31st March 2017. Letters should be in a sealed envelope addressed to Ralph Holloway (as above). The schools will forward these to County Hall. All comments received through these mechanisms or made directly to council officers or members will be collected to be included in the analysis of feedback received.

Essex County Council (ECC) handles information in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998 and is the data controller for the purposes of the Data Protection Act 1998. Your answers to this consultation will only be used to assess the community's view of the proposals and not for any other purpose. We will not give information about you to anyone outside ECC.

If you have any questions about the consultation process or the expansion proposals please contact Ralph Holloway.

The information contained in this document can be made available in alternative formats: large print, Braille, audio tape or disk and can be translated on request. Please call 03330 131189.

What happens next?

At the end of this consultation period the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning will consider the feedback and views expressed by all interested parties during the consultation and will make a decision on the proposals. Governing bodies and directors of schools/academies will also make a decision following feedback from this consultation. If a decision is made to proceed with the proposals, a Statutory Notice will be published, as required (this step does not apply to academies), in the local press and will be displayed at the main entrance to the relevant school and at other conspicuous places in the area served by the school for a four week period. This four week representation period provides the final opportunity for people and organisations to comment on, or submit an objection to, the proposal. At the end of the four week period any comments on or objections to the proposal will be considered by the Cabinet Member and a final decision will be made.

Timeline

The consultation period will run from 20th February 2017 until 31st March 2017. Below is the estimated timeline for the decision process.

Date	Activity
20 th February 2017	Consultation commences – consultation document can be viewed: http://tinyurl.com/EssexCC-Consultations
March 2017	Consultation meetings for parents, staff and interested parties: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lexden Springs School - 9th March 2017, 3.30pm to 5.30pm• Glenwood School – 7th March 2017, 3.30pm to 5.30pm• Oak View School – 8th March 2017, 2.30pm to 4.30pm
31 st March 2017	End of consultation period
April 2017	Decision by County Council on whether to proceed with the publication of Statutory Notices
*May 2017	Publication of Statutory Notices
June 2017	End of period for representations.
July 2017	Decision taken by Essex County Council on the proposals
* 1 September 2019	New Lexden Springs provision opens Glenwood School opens boarding provision Oak View School expands

* This stage will apply only if the proposal is approved by the County Council.