



Stage 2 Statutory Proposal Consultation Report on a Proposal to Open a Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Unit at Juniper Hill School and to Close the Physical Disability (PD) Additional Resource Provision (ARP).

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Date: 14th November 2023

Second Stage – Statutory Proposal Consultation Process

1.1 Recommendation

1.2 In view of the responses received, as set out below, and the fact that there was more support to the proposals than opposition it is recommended that the Council moves forward with the Leader Decision to open an Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Unit at Juniper Hill School and to close the Additionally Resourced Provision for pupils with a Physical Disability (PD).

1.3 The second stage, Statutory Proposal, consultation process to open a 12 place SEMH Unit at Juniper Hill School and to close the ARP for pupils with a Physical Disability at Juniper Hill School commenced on 13th October 2023 and concluded on 9th November 2023. In line with statutory requirements the consultation letter (see APPENDIX 1) was sent to the following consultees and also promoted via a dedicated webpage and survey on Your Voice Bucks:

Consultees
• Cabinet Member for Education and Children’s Services
• Deputy Cabinet Member for Education and Children’s Services
• The Leader of the Council
• Forward plan
• Local Councillors <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Cllr David Johncock○ Cllr Jocelyn Towns○ Cllr David Watson

• Local schools
• Special Schools
• FACT Bucks
• Local MP – Joy Morrissey
• LA Staff
• Teaching associations and Unison
• RC and ODB boards
• Parish/Town council
• DfE
• Parents/carers
• PTFA/Friends
• School staff
• Community groups
• Residents near to school
• Any groups that use school premises
• Village/Town groups
• Pre-school/child minders
• School council
• Local Church/Mosque/Iman

Second Stage Consultation Outcome

- 1.4 The Council received 29 responses to the consultation proposal. 25 of these came in via the Your Voice consultation page and 4 came to the consultation mailbox or by post to the School Commissioning Team.
- 1.5 In summary of the 29 who responded 24 (83%) were in agreement with the proposal to open an SEMH UNIT; 3 (10%) did not agree; and, 2 (7%) didn't know or didn't say.
- 1.6 Of the 29 who responded to the proposal to close the PD ARP; 16 (55%) agreed with the proposal; 5 (17%) disagreed; and, 8 (28%) didn't know or didn't say.

Agree/Disagree to the proposal to open an SEMH Unit and close the PD ARP				
	Yes	No	Don't Know/Didn't say	TOTAL
Open SEMH Unit	24	3	2	29
Close PD Unit	16	5	8	29

- 1.7 In terms of the respondents to the consultation, respondents were asked to state who they were responding to the consultation as Respondents could select multiple options and therefore the total for 'who' (35) is greater than the number of responses (29). For example,

a respondent could be a parent, trustee and live near the school. Table 1 below shows how responses were broken down by each category.

TABLE 1: Who responded?	
Who - Respondents could select multiple options and therefore the total for 'who' is greater than the number of responses (30).	
Buckinghamshire Council Employee	0
Staff Member at Juniper Hill School	18
Governor at Juniper Hill School	0
Parent at Juniper Hill School	4
Local Resident/live near MT - (may also be parent/staff etc so some duplication)	10
MP/CIr	0
Work at another local school	2
Other	0
Represent community group	1
	35

Table 2 below shows responses by each category to the proposal to open and SEMH Unit at the school.

TABLE 2: Question: Do you agree with the proposal to open an SEMH Unit?	
Staff/Governor	Number
Yes	18
No	0
Don't know/didn't say	0
Parent	
Yes	2
No	2
Don't know/didn't say	0
Work at another school	
Yes	1
No	0
Don't know/didn't say	1
Community/Voluntary Group	
Yes	1
No	0
Didn't know/didn't say	0
Local Resident	
Yes	7
No	2

Don't know/didn't say	1
BC Employee	
Yes	0
No	0
Don't know/didn't say	0
Other	
Yes	0
No	0
Don't know/didn't say	0

Table 3 below shows responses by each category to the proposal to close the PD ARP at the school.

TABLE 3: Question: Do you agree with the proposal to close the PD ARP?	
Staff/Governor	Number
Yes	15
No	1
Don't know/didn't say	2
Parent	
Yes	0
No	2
Don't know/didn't say	2
Work at another school	
Yes	0
No	0
Don't know/didn't say	2
Community/Voluntary Group	
Yes	1
No	0
Didn't know/didn't say	0
Local Resident	
Yes	4
No	3
Don't know/didn't say	3
BC Employee	
Yes	0
No	0
Don't know/didn't say	0
Other	
Yes	0
No	0

- 1.8 From the tables above it can be noted that the majority of those objecting to the proposal to open an SEMH Unit are parents (2) and local residents (2). However, it should be noted that this is a very low opposition rate. Of those who objected the concerns for the most part were concerned about existing traffic issues around the school and the impact an additional 12 pupils might have on traffic.
- 1.9 There was relatively low level objection to the proposed closure of the ARP with the most objections (3) coming from local residents.
- 1.10 The parents/carers who responded to the consultation to open an SEMH Unit were evenly split in their responses with 2 in favour and 2 against. Of those who were against the proposal, the impact of the Unit on traffic was mentioned as was the impact the unit may have on the rest of the school.
- 1.11 Of the parents that responded on the closure of the ARP 2 were against the closure and 2 didn't know/or didn't say. Of those who made a comment parents felt there was a need for ARP provision for pupils with a physical disability. As was set out in the consultation documents, whilst it is proposed to close the ARP the school will continue to admit children with a physical disability and pupils (current and future) will continue to receive the same level of support as they do now.
- 1.12 Of the respondents who disagreed with the proposals to open an SEMH Unit and made further comments, the main concerns/issues raised were:

Comments Submitted against the proposal to open an SEMH Unit:

- *Comment: The school is located down a quiet residential street which already encounters a horrendous amount of traffic. The school was built for 200 pupils not 420. Any increase in numbers would add to the over crowding. Parking is already blocking driveways on small residential roads. Due to the specialised unit pupils will probably come from far away, poor transport facilities at our small village. This unit should be located at or near a town centre. More staff will be required so more cars parking all day long on local roads. This extra to staff already parking here all day long*
- **Response: In order to minimise any potential impact of this proposal the school will implement different start and finish times for the Unit. The School's current start and finish times are 8.45am – 3.30pm. It is proposed that the start and finish times for the new Unit would be 08:30am arrival and 15:15 departure. Having different start and finish times for the children in our SEMH unit would be hugely beneficial to the children and would help with parking and traffic at the school during peak hours.**
- **Like most Schools there can be congestion outside the school for short periods during morning drop off and afternoon pick up. The School is actively working to reduce congestion in the area. They have an up-to-date Bronze Travel Plan and are**

constantly looking at ways to minimise the impact of morning drop off/afternoon pick up on the local area.

- The school is seeking to appoint a Crossing Patrol Person who will start working at the school imminently which will be of huge assistance to parents and pupils and will improve safety for pupils needing to cross roads to access the school.
- The School is also working with the Local Council and Football Association on a plan to use the local Football Club carpark on Green Dragon Lane, for parents to park at drop off and pick up. The Council have recently installed a pedestrian gate, completed risk assessments and installed the lines and signs needed to facilitate this proposal. The School is committed to trying to reduce the traffic around the school. Once the Crossing Patrol Person has started, the School will encourage parents to park at the Football Club and walk. As an incentive the School will reward pupils who utilise this facility.
- *Comment: The unit will not be a positive thing for current students. It will take away the time of the headteacher and the inclusion lead. The reason why the school works as well as it does is because of the commit by the staff. The staff will be overstretched by the unit and the current children will miss out. The unit will be for children that have severe issues further to situations like abuse. These are children that can not cope in mainstream school so why are there plans to integrate wherever possible causing a huge safeguarding issue. When the children from the unit are integrated into their 'assign Juniper class', this will push up class sizes another negative for the current pupils. I understand what the headteacher is trying to offer these children. However, this unit will have a negative impact on the current Juniper children, which is such a huge concern.*
- **Response: Juniper is a highly inclusive nurturing school. They see every individual child. Children are at the heart of all they do. Not only have the Juniper Team received training on how to support children with SEMH needs, but new members of staff will be appointed to work in the Unit, this will ensure the current staffing team aren't over stretched.**
- **As the new SEMH children will be predominately taught in the Unit, this won't increase numbers in the mainstream classrooms. When they do integrate, their numbers in different classes across the school will be very small. As the children settle to learn, they will only access lessons they can experience success in. When integrating into their mainstream class they will be supported by an experienced, specialised member of staff. If they struggle / become dysregulated they will be fully supported, therefore, this won't impact their mainstream peer. The children will be supervised at all times, there should be no safeguarding concerns in school. There are many benefits of opening the unit for the existing pupils. The School Development Plan has identified the training needs for the staff, all children will benefit. There are**

a number of children at Juniper that have a lower level of SEMH needs that the staff will now understand more and be able to support.

The school is good at challenging and stretching the more able children, in all areas of the school, e.g. sport, music and academic performance. The school successfully meets the needs of ALL pupils.

1.13 Of those who responded but didn't know/or say if they supported the proposal, the main comments raised were:

- *Comment: I cannot imagine that there can be any children in this category. I see many children passing my window on their way to school and they all look happy. They are walking, skipping or running, chatting and laughing.*
- **Response: Over the last five years, the number of Special Educational Needs and Disabled (SEND) pupils with an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) has increased by 50% (1805 pupils). Current projections forecast a further 32% increase in the number of EHCP pupils over the next five years. Children and young people with communication and interaction needs and social, emotional and mental health needs is increasing most (1424 or 64% over the last 5 years) with projections forecasting a further increase of 1533 pupils or 42% over the next 5 years. This data clearly evidences the need for additional SEMH provision.**
- *Comment: Depends on the expertise they have to set up and run the unit.*
- **Response: The Juniper Team have received training on how to support children with SEMH needs. The Unit would be an extension of what they already do as a school. The School Development Plan has identified the training needs for the staff, all children will benefit. There are a number of children at Juniper that have a lower level of SEMH needs that the staff will now understand more and be able to support.**

1.14 Of the respondents who agree with the proposal to open an SEMH Unit at the school and made further comments, the main comments raised were:

- *We have children at our school with SEMH needs who are struggling to manage in our setting but do not fulfil the criteria for a specialist school either due to being age related in their outcomes or not having a diagnosis. There needs to be a setting suitable for these children who are close to exclusion but have 'nowhere to go'.*
- *I think with the current rise in children's mental health issues this project is very much needed.*
- *There is clear need for this provision, and the effects of the Covid pandemic have added to this. There is potential for these children to be overlooked and early intervention/support would make a huge difference to their lives.*

- *I feel it is important for young people with SEMH needs to have a place dedicated to them.*
- *Sadly, it is a much needed service. These children will be given a chance to flourish, and experience having their needs met as they might not have before.*
- *This is a much needed resource for children in Buckinghamshire who are suffering from trauma and mental health issues. If approved, this unit will make a significant difference to some of the most vulnerable children in our society.*
- *Many schools are unable to support children with SEMH and more children are suffering.*
- *It will have specialist staff to support these children.*
- *There is a real need for this kind of specialised support. If early intervention is done well and with compassion, the child's future can be transformed.*
- *I think that all children should be able to access education and the social elements of school. This is not always possible when children have experienced trauma in their lives and a unit that can work with such children and support them is a positive thing.*
- *There isn't one in this area and it is needed desperately.*
- *The extra places for children with SEMH needs are urgently needed. Juniper Hill is an ideal location for this Unit because of the available space and the school's experience of running the PD ARP. We acknowledge that some parents and neighbours have concerns about traffic but we believe that the school's efforts in this area will mitigate any negative effects.*

1.15 Of the respondents who disagreed with the proposal to close the PD ARP or said they didn't know and made further comments, the main concerns/issues raised were:

Comments Submitted against the proposal to close the PD ARP:

- *Comment: Disabled children who are able to access mainstream education are seriously overlooked. As a parent and teacher of a child with SEND, finding a school that is appropriate for my child's needs but still allows him to be independent and mix with children his age is extremely challenging. Any mainstream school that is able to accommodate his needs is seriously over-subscribed with waiting lists of 2+ years.*
- *Comment: There needs to be more done in order to support ALL children of any ability. Closing provisions that allow children to be children in a safe, welcoming, and nurturing environment is criminal, especially when the opportunities are already limited for them. They deserve to be treated with the same level of respect and care as children with no SEND.*
- **Response: Children with a physical disability attending a mainstream school are increasingly able to access their local school with the benefits of being part of their**

local school community. With the delivery of new schools across the county and adaptations being made to existing schools more children are now able to be educated within their own communities as schools have become increasingly able to meet the needs of pupils with a wide range of SEND needs. This has therefore reduced the number of children who have needed to be placed into PD ARPs across the county.

- Juniper Hill School will continue to offer places to children that have physical disability needs where they meet the school's admissions criteria.
- *Comment: I do not think there are enough accessible ARP's within the south bucks area*
- **Response: See response above.**
- *Comment: If a child has broken an arm or a leg then they would need help.*
- **Response: The school will continue to support all pupils at the school. Pupils who break an arm or leg will receive the support that they require to access their education whilst they recover from their injury. pupils would not be placed in the ARP as a result of an accident (unless they were already pupils based at the ARP).**
- *Comment: As they are already located here it will mean disruption to them moving elsewhere.*
- **Response: as was made clear in the consultation documents all Pupils currently in the Juniper Hill School Physical Disability ARP would continue to receive the same level of support, as they currently receive, throughout their time at the school. No child will need to be moved from the school to another educational establishment. We will work closely with parents of children and young people in the ARP to make sure the proposed closure had no negative impacts on pupils.**
- Juniper Hill School would continue to offer places to children that have physical disability needs where they meet the school's admissions criteria.

1.16 Of those who responded but didn't know/or say if they supported the proposal, the main comments raised were:

- *I am very torn, because there aren't many purely PD ARPs in Bucks and I feel that closing the PD ARP is at a detriment to those young people who need it. I am aware that the demand for a purely PD ARP has dropped over the last few years.*
- *Although numbers are smaller it is still an important service to provide.*
- *I don't know enough about the need for a physical disability resource unit. I'm sure the current parents of the children that do attend this unit are not too happy with the idea of this closing.*
- *I am not aware of whether this ARP is full or not and whether it is required or not.*

1.17 Of the respondents who agree with the proposal to close the PD ARP at the school and made further comments, the main comments raised were:

- *If it is not being used and the money can be put into good use somewhere else then it should close.*
- *The request for ARP places has declined considerably over the last few years and it makes sense to consolidate ARP provision.*
- *Most physical disabilities can be met in mainstream education where the need is just Physical disability*
- *Children should be integrated within any mainstream school if their primary need is due to physical disability. They should not need a separate unit to meet their needs.*
- *All schools should be able to meet the needs of children with physical disabilities, unless they also have additional needs that require them to be in a specialist placement.*
- *It will allow the school to focus on the needs of the children in the unit as well as running its inclusive primary.*
- *They will still be cared for appropriately in their school community.*
- *Thanks to improved attitudes towards inclusion, and the improved accessibility of modern schools, the demand for specialist PD provision has declined. Therefore we are assured that the ARP is no longer required.*

1.18 No elected representative for Buckinghamshire submitted a response.

1.19 Having analysed the consultation responses received on the proposal to open an SEMH Unit and close the PD ARP at the school, whilst the overall response rate was relatively low, on the whole there was clearly more support for the proposals than opposition and most of the objection to the new Unit relates to existing traffic issues rather than the opening of a new Unit in itself. The number of responses was relatively low (despite being publicised through a variety of channels in line with statutory guidance)

1.20 **In view of the responses received and the fact that there was more support to the proposals than opposition it is recommended that the Council moves forward with the publication of the Leader Decision recommending that the proposals are approved.**