**Consultation on the Proposal to Increase the capacity at Beaucroft Foundation Special School by 80 places from September 2022.**

1. **Summary**

1.1 The SEND Capital Strategy 2020 -2025 was agreed by Cabinet on 8th December 2020 and committed to future capital funding to a programme of work to deliver increased SEND specialist provision across the county. This was to support the mitigation of the deficit on the High Needs Block and support more children being educated locally in their communities.

1.2 The proposal to refurbish the former Wimborne First School premises to use as part of an expanded Beaucroft School forms part of the SEND Capital Strategy and supports the need to provide additional places within the SEND sector, with this particular project focussed on post 16 provision, but benefitting increases across multiple year groups. The project has the full support of Beaucroft School.

1.3 The proposal is to add 80 places through the repurposing of the Wimborne First School site on School Lane in Wimborne.

1.4 The proposal, amongst other outcomes, looks to ensure sufficient Post 16 capacity within Dorset and specifically targeting those being educated outside Dorset in independent settings.

1. **Financial Implications**
	1. At their meeting on 6th April 2021 Cabinet agreed a funding commitment of between £35m and £40m to support the implementation of the SEND Capital Strategy, subject to feasibility studies and further planning and individual projects such as this would be brought forward for approval. This is the first project being brought forward under this capital allocation
2. **Well-being and Health Implications**

3.1 The provision of good quality SEND local education provision is essential for health and wellbeing of children, young people, and families.

1. **Climate implications**
	1. It is anticipated that through the delivery of this project it will enable suitable places to be located more locally which will avoid the significant travel implications some pupils currently have to undertake.

4.2 As with all property related work climate change implications are always considered and will be addressed where possible.

1. **Other Implications**

5.1 Revenue costs for the running of the school will be paid from the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). It is anticipated that space made available will be filled by students who otherwise would attend Specialist Post 16 institutions (at an average cost of £55,700 compared to an average cost of a place at Beaucroft of £18,200). This proposal to have additional capacity delivered at the old Wimborne First School site for Beaucroft Special School will be subject to consideration under the split-site funding protocol.

5.2 Special Schools may not be funded for post 19 pupils from the DSG. Post 19 pupils may undertake further education, training, a supported internship, or an apprenticeship as an adult learner if it supports the outcomes set out in their Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Schools are not legally set up to provide education for adult learners and therefore cannot supply education to this age group.

1. **Equalities Impact Assessment**

6.1 This proposal will increase the number of Special School places available to Dorset pupils, with the intention of reducing the number having to be placed outside the Council area.

Letter of support from Beaucroft School



Site of former Wimborne First School, School Lane Wimborne.

1. **Land ownership**
	1. The area outlined in red on the plan below is in the ownership of Dorset Council and until June 2020 was occupied by Wimborne First School. T
	2. It is proposed to use the whole of the area outlined in red, with the exception of the area occupied by Wimborne Kindergarten on the playing field, for the Beaucroft College proposal.

