

Beauchamps High School

Consultation on a proposal to enlarge the premises of the school and increase its capacity to 1550 places from 2024

October/ November 2022



Essex County Council

Introduction

The County Council must ensure that there is a school place every year for each child in Essex. In doing so we want to take every opportunity to allow more parents to send their child to their preferred school and support schools to increase the educational achievement and life chances of all young people.

As is the case across many parts of Essex there is predicted to be continued pressure on school places in the Basildon District. Additional secondary school places will be required from 2024 onwards in the Wickford area specifically. We have been working with the schools in the area to find solutions to meet the additional need. Whilst meeting the increased demand for places has been made harder by the restraints on public expenditure, providing sufficient school places remains a high priority for the County Council.

In response to this growth in the demand for secondary school places we are seeking your views on a proposal to expand Beauchamps High School from 1,400 places to 1,550 places, making it a nine form of entry secondary school, able to admit an additional 30 pupils per year group. We show in this document why we consider it essential to provide new school places in Wickford, from 2024 onwards and I invite you to let me have your views on this proposal. All the views expressed will be taken into account by the Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Skills and Training when he decides whether to progress with the proposed expansion.



Clare Kershaw
Director, Education

Background

The Wickford area has recently experienced a rise in the demand for secondary school places, as a result of families moving into the area and new housing. Latest forecasts indicate continued growth in pupil numbers and additional provision is required to balance future supply and demand for local school places.

Pupil Forecasts and Deficit of Secondary School Places

Essex County Council (ECC) has a duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places for children living in the county. In order to do this we monitor birth rates, new housing developments and patterns of parental preference across groups of schools. This information is used to forecast pupil numbers and to ensure there are sufficient school places across the county.

The following table shows the forecast for the availability of Year 7 places over the next ten years in the Wickford area, as shown in ECC's "10 Year Plan – Meeting the demand for school places in Essex - 2022 to 2031".

Year	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32
+/-	-10	-16	-10	-38	-41	-50	-37	-21	-62	-54

These forecasts indicate that there will be a need for more than 30 additional Year 7 places longer term, and that there will be a requirement for further school place expansion in the area. However since these forecasts were compiled, the Basildon Local Plan has been withdrawn so ECC are mindful that there may be lower demand in reality while housing plans are determined. The Wickford schools also admit a number of children from out-of area, which has the potential to overstate local demand for places. The historic inward mobility from other areas across the wider Basildon district, and the number of children registered with a GP will continue to be monitored, as will the actual numbers of pupils in schools.

This provides confidence that the proposed 1 form of entry expansion at Beauchamps High School, which will increase the admission number from 240 to 270 each year, is the appropriate solution to both the short term and forecast longer term deficit of school places.

School Expansion Proposal

It is proposed to expand Beauchamps High School from 1,400 places to 1,550 places by extending the current accommodation at the school, making it a nine forms of entry secondary school. This would enable the school to permanently admit 270 Year 7 children each year, an increase of 30 over the current capacity.

Expansion of the school will provide more places to meet the growing demand in Wickford and will enable more parents to gain a place for their child at their preferred local school.

Admissions

The admissions criteria and priority admission area for the school would not change as a result of the proposed expansion.

The school is expected to increase admissions into Year 7 and grow to its full capacity over five years, however ECC will monitor the demand for places and if necessary will arrange for capacity in higher year groups to be made available ahead of schedule if needed.

Transport Arrangements

Transport arrangements would remain in line with the home to school transport policies of Essex County Council and the existing Travel Plan would be reviewed by the school.

Building Work

In conjunction with the school leadership, the proposed solution currently being considered is to create a new extension to the existing building which would accommodate a general classroom, 2 science laboratories, a music classroom, an extensive music classroom, a nurture room, a group room and a SEND office, along with associated ancillary spaces.

Funding

The County Council has made provision in its Capital Programme for the proposed school expansion. The Council publishes its capital programme at www.essex.gov.uk.

What happens next?

At the end of this consultation period the Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Skills and Training will consider all feedback and views expressed by interested parties during the consultation and will make a decision on whether to proceed with the school expansion proposal. The governing body of the school will also consider the feedback from this consultation and decide if it still wishes to support the proposal.

Timeline

The consultation period will run from 31 October 2022 to 27 November 2022. Meetings will be held with staff during this period. Below is the estimated timeline for the decision process.

31 October 2022	Consultation commences – consultation document can be viewed: https://www.essex.gov.uk/school-organisation-and-place-planning/consultations-and-statutory-proposals
10 November 2022	Drop in sessions for parents and the local community to be held at the school between 2pm - 3pm, and 5pm - 6pm.
27 November 2022	End of consultation period
January 2023	Decision by ECC on whether to continue with proposal to expand Beauchamps High School
* 1 September 2024	Beauchamps High School expands to become a nine form of entry secondary school

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

All written comments should be received by ECC by 27 November 2022. 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 responses to this consultation will only be used to assess the community's view of the proposed amalgamation and not for any other purpose. We will not give information about you to anyone outside the County Council.

The information contained in this leaflet can be made available in alternative formats: large print, Braille, audio tape or disk. Please call 03330 131071.

How Can You Make Your Views Known?

ECC is seeking the views of all interested persons about the proposal to expand Beauchamps High School. At this stage no decision has been made on the expansion proposal and all the views received will be considered prior to a decision being taken as to whether to go ahead with the proposal. A final decision will be taken in the context of the growing need for more secondary school places in Wickford.

This consultation is about whether you think an expansion at Beauchamps High School is needed, given the predicted increase in the number of local children needing a school place. The proposed changes to the building, to allow this expansion, are listed below.

You are invited to respond to this consultation using the following electronic survey form:

<https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/school-organisation/beauchamps>

You may also send feedback and comments to:

School Organisation Team
school.organisation@essex.gov.uk

County Hall – C418
Market Road
Chelmsford CM1 1GS

All comments received through these mechanisms or made directly to council officers or members will be collected and included in the analysis of feedback received.

If you have any questions or would like further information about the consultation process or the expansion proposal you can call or email Rhona Long, School Organisation Officer, at rhona.long@essex.gov.uk Alternatively you may contact the chair of governors of the school, via the school office.

Published October 2022