

Consultation on the proposal to expand The Beacon Folkestone to open a satellite provision at the former Walmer Science College and increase the designated number of the School from 380 places to 548 places.

**Public Meeting
Thursday 30 January 2020**

In Attendance:	Neil Birch	Executive Headteacher
	Ady Young	Headteacher
	Julie Nixon	Chair of Governors
	David Adams	Area Education Officer – South Kent
	Lee Round	Area Schools Organisation Officer – South Kent
	Louise Burgess	Head of SEN Assessment & Placement
	Peter Stewart	Principal Lead – Special Schools, PRUs & SRPs (Skills and Employability)
	Julie Hawkins	Notetaker

Purpose of the Meeting

To explain the proposal to expand The Beacon Folkestone, Park Farm Road, Folkestone, Kent CT19 5DN onto a satellite site at the former Walmer Science College, Salisbury Rd, Walmer CT14 7QJ from September 2020. The expansion onto the satellite site will provide a further 168 special school places for pupils with Profound, Severe and Complex Needs (PSCN) increasing the designated number of The Beacon Folkestone from the present 380 places to 548 places.

Julie Nixon (Chair of Governors) welcomed everyone to the meeting and handed over to David Adams.

David Adams explained why KCC had approached The Beacon, how the Walmer building would be adapted in phases and what funding was available. It was an opportunity for questions and for KCC to note views before the proposal goes before Members. In attendance also was the Member for Deal and Walmer, Derek Murphy and Peter Stewart Principal Lead for special schools, PRUs and SRP's.

The proposal is to expand The Beacon Folkestone onto a satellite site at the former Walmer Science College which has been empty for approximately twelve months. Why The Beacon? Pressure for PSCN places is significant, The Beacon is an Outstanding school with experience of running split site provision with a satellite at Castle Hill CPS. The Beacon has a strong team with the capacity to replicate the provision. A significant proportion of pupils at The Beacon come from Deal/Dover. For any pupils who may benefit from a placement in either the satellite at Castle Hill or Walmer, the decision will be made in discussion with the pupil and their family.

Neil Birch (Executive Headteacher) – the team at The Beacon has a wealth of experience to deliver the project following the amalgamation of Foxwood and Highview schools. Students coming in from Deal do not have the opportunity to integrate into their own community and this project will change that. Ady Young (Headteacher) commented that they were building on the expertise they already have. Neil Birch - The phases of the build were staggered and manageable. The

Beacon were confident that they could recruit staff in time for the September opening. Neil Birch noted how exciting this opportunity was and that it could be something wonderful for the young people of Dover and Deal. The MASH support services would not be replicated at Walmer but members from the MASH were on the Governing Body at The Beacon and conversations will be ongoing.

Councillor Derek Murphy was over the moon to welcome The Beacon into Walmer, it was a fantastic opportunity.

Louise Burgess – Noted that the number of EHCP’s in 2019 exceeded 14,000 compared to 6,000 in 2016. There is no sign of a reduction in the trend. The Local Authority is hoping to commission an additional 1,634 places in special schools and SRPs between now and 2023, including the Walmer site.

Questions and Responses

Comment	Response
The quality of staff at The Beacon goes without question. What about recruitment for the September opening?	Ady Young – we have many teachers coming through from teacher training, in effect we ‘grow our own’ and find opportunities for them. We expect greater numbers again next year. We are good at retaining staff and have quality induction packages. We are confident on the staffing aspect.
If we considered moving our children to Walmer would class sizes be similar, they are currently 12ish?	Ady Young – classroom sizes will not be vastly different from The Beacon. Most of our classrooms are built on optimums of 8 – 10.