
Expansion, remodelling and development of the SEND (McKee) Resource Unit (Phase 1) at Westwood Farm Schools Federation

Committee considering report:	Executive
Date of Committee:	12 February 2026
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Heather Codling
Report Author:	Brian Roohan v.1 Natalie Taylor v.2 & v.3
Forward Plan Ref:	EX4766

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the expansion and remodelling of the McKee Resource Unit at Westwood Farm Schools Federation, increasing its capacity from 12 to 18 places and extending provision to Key Stage 2. This proposal represents a significant and strategically aligned enhancement to the Council's local specialist SEND offer. It directly supports the delivery of the SEND Sufficiency and Inclusion Strategy, responding to sustained growth in demand for high-quality, in-borough provision for children with complex needs.
- 1.2 The expansion will enable a continuous all-through primary pathway, reducing unnecessary transitions at age seven, improving educational stability, and strengthening inclusive practice within a mainstream school environment. In addition, the proposal offers substantial value to the local authority through reduced reliance on independent and out-of-area placements, generating important cost avoidance and contributing to long-term financial sustainability within the High Needs Block.
- 1.3 This development builds on an already successful Key Stage 1 resource, has strong community and stakeholder support, and provides a timely, deliverable and cost-effective opportunity to increase specialist capacity in a densely populated area.

2 Recommendations

That the Executive:

- 2.1 Approves the expansion and remodelling of the McKee Resource Unit at Westwood Farm Schools Federation from 12 to 18 places, including the extension of provision into Key Stage 2.

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- 2.2 Notes that the proposal supports the Council’s SEND Sufficiency and Inclusion Strategy, delivering cost avoidance through reduced reliance on independent and out-of-area placements.
- 2.3 Delegates authority to the Head of SEND, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Education, to oversee the implementation and ongoing monitoring of the expanded provision

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	The capital cost of the scheme is £1.214m, funded through SEND capital grant. Ongoing revenue costs of approximately £195,600 per annum will be met from the High Needs Block. This compares favourably with independent provision costs averaging £65,000 per pupil per year, delivering estimated annual cost avoidance of £164,100 for six KS2 places.
Human Resource:	The expanded unit will require additional support staff and teaching assistants. Staffing will be funded through existing SEND funding mechanisms and aligned to EHCP needs.
Legal:	The proposal supports the Council’s statutory duties under the Children and Families Act 2014, the SEND Code of Practice, and Section 27 sufficiency duties. It also supports the Council’s non-delegable duty under Section 42 to secure EHCP provision.
Risk Management:	Key risks relate to delivery timescales, staffing recruitment and maintaining integration with the mainstream school. These will be mitigated through phased delivery, early recruitment planning, and ongoing governance through SEND and school QA arrangements.
Property:	The proposal involves remodelling and extension of existing accommodation on the Westwood Farm site. No loss of mainstream places is anticipated. All works will comply with BB103, Building Regulations and WBC property standards. A statutory section 77 will be required once Executive approval has been made.
Policy:	The proposal aligns with National Policy and the West Berkshire Council SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2024–2029,

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	<p>the SEND and AP Improvement Plan (2023 - 2025), and the Delivering Better Value programme, Equalities Act 2010, SEND Regulations 2014, Children, Families Act 2014 SEND Code of Practice 2015, EHC Plans (Regs 11-17), Reviews Regs (18-20), Mediation (Regs 33 – 42) and EHC assessments (Regs 3-10)</p> <p>Building Bulletin (BB) 104, Building guidelines</p>
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	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?	X			The recommendations aim to enhance inclusivity and accessibility for children with protected characteristics, focusing on local provisions that reduce travel burdens and enable students to remain in their communities.
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?	X			The plan will directly impact the lives of families and children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities as it aims to ensure there is sufficient education places within the borough in terms of education and alternative education provision. By increasing in-borough sufficiency of education placements, a more inclusive and supportive environment is enabled for pupils with SEND.
Environmental Impact:	X			Local placements reduce the environmental impact associated with long-distance travel for pupils needing specialized provisions.
Health Impact:	X			Effective SEND Sufficiency requires robust data collection, validation, and analysis systems to monitor needs, progress and outcomes and reports to the SEND Strategic Improvement Board. This work is part of the Delivering Better Value Ensuring Sufficiency Data subgroup.
ICT Impact:	X			Effective SEND Sufficiency requires robust data collection, validation, and analysis systems to monitor needs, progress and outcomes. This work part of the Sufficiency Data subgroup.

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Digital Services Impact:		X		N/A
Council Strategy Priorities:	X			<p>The sufficiency plan is linked to DBV Programme and SEND & Inclusion Strategy in terms of the following priorities:</p> <p>Priority 3: Inclusion, Priority 4: Developing Local Specialist Provision and Support, Priority 4: Strengthening Alternative Provision and Priority 6: Preparing for Adulthood</p>
Core Business:	X			<p>The proposal will support any of the Council's Priorities for improvement and is business as usual in the following ways:</p> <p>1) Enhanced service delivery via the SEND Sufficiency plan will enable the council to better understand and meet the educational needs of pupils with SEND. This in turn reduces reliance on costly independent educational placements whilst increasing sufficiency of capital places to meet growing demand.</p> <p>2) Efficient use of resources: by strategically planning and allocating resources to meet local SEND demand for education places, the council can make more effective use of its funding with the aim of making financial savings and freeing up resources for other critical areas.</p> <p>3) Compliance: having a SEND sufficiency plan helps the council to meet its statutory duties regarding SEND. It also supports the council in managing reputational risks associated with unmet needs.</p> <p>4) Longer term planning: the sufficiency plan enables the council to be better positioned to respond to population changes and evolving needs.</p> <p>5) Promote inclusion and equal opportunities: through the SEND Sufficiency Plan, the council</p>

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				demonstrates the commitment to inclusivity and ensuring that children and young people have access to appropriate education services to meet their needs.
Data Impact:		X		N/A

Consultation and Engagement:	<p>A statutory consultation and wider engagement exercise was undertaken, generating 89 formal responses. Overall support for the proposal was exceptionally strong, with 93.2% of respondents supporting or strongly supporting the expansion.</p> <p>Engagement activity included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents and carers of children with and without EHCPs. Including the Parent Carer forum. • Westwood Farm School Council • School staff, Governors and Education, Health and Social Care Professionals. • Residents. • Targeted social media and residents’ bulletin communications. <p>Social media engagement significantly exceeded typical education consultations, demonstrating strong awareness and visibility.</p> <p>Key themes raised focused on implementation quality (staffing, design, funding) rather than opposition to the principle of expansion.</p> <p>Appendix C Consultation Summary and Engagement Assurance Report</p>
Playing Field Land Compliance (change of use)	<p>In line with the Department for Education’s definition, the area identified for this project forms part of the school’s designated playing field, although it is currently used only as a circulation route to the main field and is no longer required as a muster point following its relocation.</p> <p>Westwood Farm Schools Federation exceeds the minimum playing field area required for a school with a PAN of 60, as confirmed through the DfE playing field calculator. The school will still exceed the Department for Education’s recommended minimum outdoor space per pupil after the project’s completion.</p>

	<p>The proposed extension will not impact the school's current sports provision or restrict children's access to outdoor education, as the development does not encroach upon any marked or functional sports areas and will retain full access to the wider playing field.</p> <p>As any change of use of playing field land requires the prior consent of the Secretary of State, a Section 77 application will be submitted once the project reaches Stage 3 (Developed Design), when the final external layout and any impacts on playing field land can be fully assessed in line with DfE policy and statutory requirements.</p>
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4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 West Berkshire continues to experience sustained growth in demand for specialist SEND provision, particularly for pupils with Complex Needs. Existing maintained special schools are operating at or near capacity and without additional local provision the Council faces increasing reliance on high cost independent non maintained special school placements.
- 4.2 The McKee Resource Unit at Westwood Farm currently provides successful Key Stage 1 provision. However, the absence of KS2 capacity means pupils must transfer to special schools at age 7, disrupting continuity and increasing pressure on specialist placements.
- 4.3 This proposal expands the existing unit to create all through primary provision (KS1 and KS2), increasing capacity from 12 to 18 places. The scheme is deliverable within current capital parameters, offers significant cost avoidance compared to independent provision, and is strongly supported by parents, professionals and the local community following consultation.

Approval of this proposal will:

- 4.4 Improve continuity and outcomes for pupils with complex needs.
- 4.5 Increase local specialist capacity in a densely populated area.
- 4.6 Reduce pressure on special schools and the High Needs Block; and
- 4.7 Support delivery of local and national SEND strategy priorities.

5 Supporting Information

- 5.1 This report sets out the rationale and proposal for expanding the McKee Resource Unit at Westwood Farm School Federation to address increasing SEND demand within West Berkshire.

Background

- 5.2 Although Westwood Farm is not the single highest growth area based on EHCP data alone, it represents a deliverable and cost-effective opportunity to address a clear KS2 gap in a densely populated area, while easing pressure elsewhere in the system.
- 5.3 Demand for Complex Needs provision in West Berkshire continues to rise in line with national trends. Maintained special schools are oversubscribed, and capacity for further expansion is limited. The McKee Unit has demonstrated strong outcomes for pupils in KS1 but currently lacks KS2 continuity.

Proposal

The proposal will:

- 5.4 Increase capacity from 12 to 18 places
- 5.5 Create all-through primary provision.
- 5.6 Provide purpose-designed learning, sensory and outdoor spaces
- 5.7 Enable continuity of placement for existing pupils
- 5.8 Reduce reliance on high-cost independent placements.

6 Other options considered

- 6.1 Do Nothing: Rejected due to increasing reliance on independent placements and unsustainable High Needs Block pressure.
- 6.2 Expand alternative sites or rebuild: Rejected at this stage due to higher capital costs, longer delivery timescales and greater risk.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 The expansion of the McKee Resource Unit at Westwood Farm offers a pragmatic, deliverable and inclusive response to SEND sufficiency pressures. It builds on an established and successful provision, delivers clear educational and financial benefits, and is strongly supported through consultation.
- 7.2 Approval is therefore recommended.

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A – Equalities Impact Assessment
- 8.2 Appendix B – Data Protection Impact Assessment
- 8.3 Appendix C - Consultation Summary and Engagement Assurance

9 Background Papers:

- 9.1 SEND Sufficiency Plan
- 9.2 Westwood Farm - Project Brief (Outline Business case)
- 9.3 Westwood Farm - Business Case & Funding Application v1.0
- 9.4 Briefing Note – Expansion, Remodelling and Development of Westwood Farm RU
- 9.5 Westwood Farm Rationale
- 9.6 Innovation in SEND: SEND & Inclusion Strategy (2024-2029)
- 9.7 Accommodation Schedule

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval

Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council

Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position:

Considered or reviewed by Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees, Task Groups within preceding six months

Item is Urgent Key Decision

Report is to note only

Wards affected: Tilehurst

Officer details:

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West Berkshire Council Equity Impact Assessment

TEMPLATE

March 2023

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Section 1: Summary details

Directorate and Service Area	West Berkshire Council, Education and SEND
What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	SEND Placement Sufficiency Analysis August 2024
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	No
Summary of assessment Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community? (following completion of the assessment).	The purpose of the SEND Sufficiency Plan is to evaluate need of pupils with special education needs and disability, forecast demand for education places and provide a summary of recommendations in order to inform capital place planning and addressing the gaps. The plan focuses on inclusivity with the aim to ensure that individuals or group are not unfairly disadvantaged.
Completed By	Catherine Kane
Authorised By	Susan Tanner
Date of Assessment	5 th November 2024

Section 2: Detail of proposal

<p>Context / Background</p> <p>Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.</p>	<p>The SEND sufficiency plan and analysis was conducted in response to the council’s statutory duty to develop a sufficiency plan in response to increasing demands for SEND placements in West Berkshire. The trend is consistent with national growth in EHC Plans. The analysis identifies the need for expansion of in-borough provision, including SEN Units/Resource Provision within mainstream settings, enhancing pathways for Alternative Provision and provision of additional capacity in special schools. The plan seeks to address and mitigate the reliance on out-of-borough placements which is financially unsustainable and limits access to inclusive education.</p>
<p>Proposals</p> <p>Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.</p>	<p>The primary proposals include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expanding special school capacity for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH), and Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) needs. 2. Increasing the number of SEN units in mainstream schools to accommodate the projected 7.6% growth in primary phase and 7.1% in secondary phase demand by 2026/27. 3. Enhancing local alternative provision (AP) to meet diverse educational needs and provide reintegration pathways. 4. Developing post-16 SEND pathways, such as supported internships, vocational training, and employment preparation programs to support transitions into adulthood.
<p>Evidence / Intelligence</p> <p>List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to</p>	<p>This assessment is based on multiple data sources, including the Department for Education (DfE) School Capacity Survey (SCAP) methodology, LG Inform data on SEND profile for West Berkshire, DfE’s Local Authority Interactive Tool which compares West Berkshire against statistical neighbours and West Berkshire’s internal SEND data from Capita.</p> <p>The analysis was cross referenced with colleagues in Education, SEND and Inclusion to add more commentary to the analysis.</p>

Equity Impact Assessment

<p>inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.</p>	
<p>Alternatives considered / rejected</p> <p>Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.</p>	<p>Alternatives Considered / Rejected</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Do Nothing: Maintaining current levels of provision was rejected due to projected demand increases of 29% in primary and 31% in secondary EHC Plans, which would necessitate even greater reliance on costly out-of-borough placements.2. Increase Reliance on Out-of-Borough Placements: This option was rejected due to increasing high costs, limited local access, and the Council's strategic priority to improve in-borough provisions.

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The plan supports age-appropriate educational pathways, especially for post-16 pupils transitioning into adulthood.	Not at this point		
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Expanding local SEND provisions enhances accessibility and reduces reliance on out-of-borough placements.	Not at this point		
Gender Reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Marriage & Civil Partnership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Pregnancy & Maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Provides equal access to quality education within the local area, supporting	Not at this point		

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				diverse needs across communities.			
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Provides equal access to quality education within the local area, recognising the need for more gender responsive teaching strategies given the higher number of males in the children and young people population	Not at this point		
Sexual Orientation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable in this project's scope.			
Religion or Belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable in this project's scope.			

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Rural communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable in this project's scope.			

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Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Areas of deprivation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Improved local SEND services increase accessibility for economically disadvantaged families	Not at this point		
Displaced communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reducing out-of-borough placements supports community stability.	Not at this point		
Care experienced people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The plan promotes local, consistent support for children in care, addressing their unique vulnerabilities.	Not at this point		
The Armed Forces Community	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable in this project's scope.			

Section 4: Review

Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

Review Date	August 2025
Person Responsible for Review	Neil Goddard, Director for Education and SEND
Authorised By	

EDI employee related EQiA's should now be sent to Human Resources hrenquiries@westberks.gov.uk.

Data Protection Impact Assessment – Stage One

The General Data Protection Regulations require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) for certain projects that have a significant impact on the rights of data subjects.

Should you require additional guidance in completing this assessment, please refer to the Information Management Officer via dp@westberks.gov.uk

Directorate:	Children & Family Services
Service:	Education
Team:	Education Place Planning & Development
Lead Officer:	Natalie Taylor
Title of Project/System:	Expansion, remodelling and development of the SEND (McKee) Resource Unit (Phase 1) at Westwood Farm Schools Federation
Date of Assessment:	04/02/2026

Do you need to do a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)?

	Yes	No
<p>Will you be processing SENSITIVE or “special category” personal data?</p> <p><i>Note – sensitive personal data is described as “data revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, or trade union membership, and the processing of genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a natural person, data concerning health or data concerning a natural person’s sex life or sexual orientation”</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Will you be processing data on a large scale?</p> <p><i>Note – Large scale might apply to the number of individuals affected OR the volume of data you are processing OR both</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Will your project or system have a “social media” dimension?</p> <p><i>Note – will it have an interactive element which allows users to communicate directly with one another?</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Will any decisions be automated?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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	Yes	No
Note – does your system or process involve circumstances where an individual's input is "scored" or assessed without intervention/review/checking by a human being? Will there be any "profiling" of data subjects?		
Will your project/system involve CCTV or monitoring of an area accessible to the public?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Will you be using the data you collect to match or cross-reference against another existing set of data?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Will you be using any novel, or technologically advanced systems or processes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Note – this could include biometrics, "internet of things" connectivity or anything that is currently not widely utilised		

If you answer "Yes" to any of the above, you will probably need to complete [Data Protection Impact Assessment - Stage Two](#). If you are unsure, please consult with the Information Management Officer before proceeding.

APPENDIX C

Consultation Summary – Westwood Farm Schools Federation – draft. V1

18 December 2025

Engagement Assurance

The Local Authority is satisfied that appropriate and proportionate engagement has been undertaken in relation to this proposal. A range of engagement opportunities were provided to ensure stakeholders could access information and share their views, including a public meeting and two drop-in sessions hosted at the school. An online consultation survey and hard copy version was available via post or in person via request and direct email address to present views.

These approaches enabled both structured feedback and open discussion, supporting inclusive participation and informed responses. All feedback received has been carefully considered and has informed the conclusions and next steps set out in this summary

Proposal:

Expansion of the McKee Resource Unit from 12 to 18 places (Key Stages 1 and 2)

Total responses received: 89

Engagement period: November–December 2025

Purpose of the Consultation

The consultation sought views on a proposal to expand the McKee Resource Unit at Westwood Farm Schools Federation. The aim of the proposal is to increase local specialist SEND capacity, improve continuity of provision into Key Stage 2, and strengthen inclusive practice within mainstream education.

This document summarises the outcomes of the public consultation and engagement activity relating to the proposed expansion. It outlines the level of support expressed, key themes raised by respondents, and the actions the Local Authority proposes to take in response. The summary is intended to provide assurance and inform decision-making.

This summary also includes data from West Berkshire Council social media platform campaigns.

1. Who Responded (Profile)

- Parents/carers formed the largest group of respondents:
 - Mainstream school parents: 29.2%
 - Resource Unit parents: 10.1%
 - Parents of children with EHCPs (not at the school): 18.0%
- Residents: 22.5%
- Education professionals: 18.0%
- School staff and governors: 14.6% combined
- Strength: Strong representation from directly affected families and professionals.
- Limitation: Very low pupil voice (1 respondent). Pupil voice was limited, which is proportionate given the nature and age range of the cohort.

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2. Awareness & Understanding of the Proposal

- 78.2% were already aware of the existing Resource Unit.
- 82.8% reported understanding the proposal *very well or extremely well*.
- Only 2.3% felt they did not understand it well.
 - Strength: Clear and effective communication of the proposal.
 - Risk: A small minority still feel insufficiently informed.

3. Overall Support for the Proposal

Among those who responded to the question (74 respondents):

- 93.2% support the proposal
 - Strongly support: 77.0%
 - Support: 16.2%
- 6.8% oppose or strongly oppose
- 0% neutral / unsure
 - Strength: Exceptionally high support with minimal opposition.

4. Perceived Impact on Local Need

- 86.5% agree the expansion will help meet local demand for specialist places.
- Only 8.1% disagree.
- 91.9% believe the proposal supports inclusion and local learning.
 - Strength: Clear alignment with SEND sufficiency and inclusion priorities.
 - Evidence: Respondents consistently reference local need and reduced out-of-area placements.

5. Impact on Key Groups (Perceptions)

Group	Positive Impact
Pupils in the Resource Unit	73.0%
Mainstream pupils	63.5%
Families of pupils with SEND	93.2%
Local community	71.6%

- Strength: Very strong confidence in benefits for SEND families.
- Risks: Slightly lower confidence regarding mainstream pupils (still a clear majority positive).

6. Identified Benefits (Qualitative Themes)

Equity Impact Assessment

Respondents consistently highlighted:

- Increased local specialist capacity
- Continuity of provision from KS1 into KS2
- Reduced travel and avoidance of out-of-area placements
- Improved inclusion, empathy, and understanding
- Better-equipped facilities and specialist staff expertise
 - Strategic alignment: Strong fit with High Needs Block pressure reduction and inclusive education objectives.

7. Key Concerns Raised

While many respondents reported no concerns, those raised focused on:

- Cost and value for money
- Ensuring adequate staffing, training, and funding
- Building design, including acoustics and space standards
- Risk of the unit becoming too detached from the mainstream school
- Parking and site logistics
 - Nature of concerns: Predominantly implementation risks, not opposition to the principle.
 - Noting: all the above concerns were mitigated in the FAQ section of the consultation.

8. Disadvantage & Equality Considerations

- **70.3%** do **not** believe any group would be disadvantaged.
- **8.1%** believe some groups *may* be disadvantaged.
- **21.6%** unsure.
 - **Interpretation:** No strong equality objections, but mitigation planning should be clearly documented.

9. Overall Assessment

Key Strengths

- Very high levels of support and understanding
- Strong SEND family endorsement
- Clear alignment with local need and inclusion
- Minimal principled opposition

Key Risks / Mitigations

- Ensure funding, staffing, and training are explicit
- Address building standards (BB104 / BB93) in design stage
- Maintain strong integration with the mainstream school
- Communicate clearly on costs and long-term value

10. Conclusion

The consultation demonstrates overwhelming support for the expansion of the McKee Resource Unit, with concerns largely focused on delivery quality rather than direction. The evidence strongly supports progression to decision, subject to clear mitigation of implementation risks.

11. Engagement and Communications Reach (Social Media & Direct Communications)

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In addition to the formal consultation responses (89 completed surveys), the proposal was supported by a wide-reaching communications campaign across social media platforms and direct resident communications, demonstrating strong awareness and visibility across West Berkshire.

12. Social Media Reach

Facebook (West Berkshire Council)

- 24,675 views
- 64 interactions
- 41 likes and reactions
- 5 comments
- 15 shares
- Across all related Facebook posts:
 - 81 reactions
 - 17 comments
- This represents high visibility and engagement, particularly for an education consultation, with meaningful interaction rather than passive viewing.

Threads

- 29 views
 - Lower reach, consistent with the platform's smaller local audience and emerging usage.

Nextdoor

- 1,520 impressions
- 5 reactions
 - Demonstrates targeted engagement within the local community, particularly residents living near the school.

Residents' Bulletin (Direct Communications)

Residents' Bulletin – (12 November)

- Sent to 20,119 residents
- 49.32% open/display rate
- 14 link clicks

Residents' Bulletin – (3 December)

- 4 link clicks
 - The open rate is strong for a local authority bulletin, indicating effective penetration into households, with clear pathways provided to access consultation materials.

Overall Engagement Assessment

- The consultation achieved strong digital reach, significantly exceeding the number of formal survey responses.
- Engagement data indicates:
 - High awareness
 - Active interaction (comments, reactions, shares)

Equity Impact Assessment

- Effective signposting to consultation materials
- Social media performance compares favourably with previous education consultations, particularly on Facebook.

Conclusion on Engagement

The combination of:

- High survey response quality
- Strong social media reach
- Effective direct resident communications

provides confidence that the consultation was widely promoted, accessible, and visible, supporting the robustness of the consultation process and the validity of the feedback received.

Appendix

We asked / You said / We will do
<p>We asked: Whether stakeholders support the proposal to expand the McKee Resource Unit at Westwood Farm Schools Federation to 18 places (including KS2), and what benefits or concerns they identified.</p>
<p>You said:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strong support for the proposal (93% support), with clear recognition of the need for more local specialist SEND places.• The expansion would improve inclusion, reduce travel, and provide continuity of provision through the primary years.• Most respondents raised no concerns.• Where concerns were identified, these focused on:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Funding and value for money○ Staffing, training, and maintaining quality○ Building design, space, acoustics, and site logistics○ Ensuring the Resource Unit remains well integrated with the mainstream school
<p>We will do</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proceed to the next decision stage, reflecting the overwhelmingly positive consultation outcome.• Ensure funding, staffing, and training plans are clearly defined and quality assured.• Apply relevant DfE building standards (including space and acoustics) during design and delivery.• Maintain strong integration with the mainstream school to support inclusion.• Continue to communicate clearly with families, staff, and the local community as the proposal progresses.