

Response to the consultation on the proposal to close Westfield Special School Sixth Form

From Herefordshire Council's Children and Young People's
Directorate

This document also includes detailed responses to the comments made during the consultation period grouped by themes.

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Summary statement in response to the consultation findings

As a result of thorough consideration of the consultation responses, the Directorate is recommending to Herefordshire Council that it does not close Westfield School Sixth Form.

However, in the light of the Council already having sufficient places for post-16 students at the Beacon College, the Directorate is recommending that a small 6th form base will be provided.

It is proposed that the new school (subject to full Council agreement) will be built with flexible space to provide this small sixth form base. This will mean that it will not have the full range of facilities that can be offered at Beacon College as we do not believe that the duplication of a second sixth form facility on the scale of Beacon College can be justified with regard to the prudent use of public expenditure. We will be asking Westfield School and Beacon College to continue to work co-operatively to prioritise places for pupils at Westfield Sixth Form for those least able to travel to Beacon College or where there is a clear case that the benefits of a pupil's travel to Beacon College would be limited as a result of the severity of their disability whilst ensuring that those who can benefit most from the provision at Beacon College are encouraged to take up those opportunities. It is in this way that we can ensure the maximum benefit for Herefordshire's young people with learning difficulties within the funding available.

The Council will still operate within the framework provided by the statutory guidance within the SEND Code of Practice (2015) in relation to the naming of an educational setting within a student's EHC Plan for post-16 education and the element of parental preference relating to this.

In shaping these revised proposals, the Directorate accepts the views expressed regarding travel times for some students and travel for those with the most severe learning difficulties and/or medical difficulties. However, the Directorate does not fully accept the views expressed with regard to 'choice', use of the community, the size of schools, equality of provision for those in the north of the county or the quality of the education provided. A detailed explanation regarding each of these themes is given in the tables below.

Notes

The Council has not sought to make a judgement on the current quality of the education in Westfield or the Beacon College during this consultation. Both schools are judged as 'good or better' for their sixth form work.

Notes for clarification of terminology

Best value –

In addition to considering the impact on children and young people with SEND of proposed projects it will be important to bear in mind when considering a capital project, the scope, scale and budget, of the proposal, the needs of the Herefordshire community as a whole, the best use of any financial investment, and how many pupils that investment would benefit

Equality duties –

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the ‘general duty’ on public authorities is set out as follows:

- a) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to – eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

The Equality Act 2010 established a positive obligation on local authorities to promote equality and to reduce discrimination in relation to any of the nine ‘protected characteristics’ (age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; marriage and civil partnership; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation). In particular, the council must have ‘due regard’ to the public sector equality duty when taking any decisions on service changes

Public petition comments

Broad theme	Summary of comments/concern.	Answer/reply
Community	The removal of the sixth form would take away part of the local community	We would hope that Westfield School continue to use the local community facilities in exactly the same way with year 10 and 11 pupils, and also for the cohort of post 16 pupils that Herefordshire Council proposes to commission in the future
Community	Students will feel they have been removed from their community	As stated in the SEN code of practice, the process of preparing pupils with SEND for adulthood starts in year 9 and in some cases even earlier, and we would expect that this would be the case for any pupil making a move from Westfield to any other setting. Having a positive experience of moving to a different school or college with different opportunities is something that can be of benefit for most students.
Community	The sixth form/ school is excellent and can offer a wide range of activities in the community	We acknowledge the quality of provision offered by Westfield. Barrs Court School run by Accordia Trust is judged as outstanding by Ofsted and has been so for many years. We have every confidence that Beacon College will offer outstanding provision for all SEND pupils including those that move to Beacon from Westfield
Community	The sixth form needs to stay in Leominster.	This is a statement without particular explanation and is covered by the responses to the other comment.
Choice	The removal of the sixth form would take away post 16 choice for our north Herefordshire pupils with severe and complex learning disabilities	The Council has a duty to meet the needs of young people with SEND but there is no absolute requirement to offer 'choice'. Parents are able to express a preference.

Broad theme	Summary of comments/concern.	Answer/reply
Travel	<p>The many individual comments are shown on the other documents, a link to these can be found at the top of this document. The tables below provide a summary, picking out the key aspects of the individual comments/concerns</p> <p>Transporting children out of their local community will make them feel unsafe Some parents have had poor previous experience of travel to schools at a distance from the home The children should not have to travel further afield, Hereford is too far for disabled children</p>	<p>The majority of Herefordshire pupils with SEND, including many at Westfield, already travel to and from school. Children get used to a particular journey to school. For those for it is appropriate, the Council provided travel training will give students confidence in travelling within the County.. In order to try to reduce the travel time as much as possible, Herefordshire Council will seek to regularly review transport time and distance by effective route planning. The proposal is for those with very long journeys or those with high levels of medical need to access their sixth form learning at Westfield.</p>

Pupil responses to the questionnaire

Broad theme	Response/comment	Answer/reply to the pupils
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students feel safe at Westfield where they can be with their friends • Friends, feel safe, small classes 	<p>If you make a move to a new school, some of your friends will probably move with you, so you will still see them at the new school. Young people also make new friends when they move to a new school or college. At Beacon College, classes are small – probably the same size as the class that you are in at Westfield.</p>
Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would like to have a choice, all of my friends are here • I would like to go to a small school • I like Westfield school because I can walk around Leominster and visit local places and it's close to where I live 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of the other pupils attending a special school in Herefordshire move to a new school or college when they are 16, and they see their friends at their new school, because their friends move too.

Broad theme	Response/comment	Answer/reply to the pupils
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the Beacon College there are planned to be about 60 pupils, which is nearly the same number as at Westfield. It's nice to be able to stay in your local town and be near where you live, but sometimes it's also nice to see new places, and make some new friends
Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I would like to travel by car, taxi or walk I don't like to travel on a big bus or train If we went to beacon college it would be too long to travel for some people 	<p>Many pupils at Westfield travel to school in a car or taxi, some of them travel quite a long way. Because they are used to doing this and feel safe, it works well. Your teachers and parents would help you to get used to a different journey if you move schools, so that you feel safe travelling to a new school.</p>
Small Classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I feel happy, small classes The other schools are massive and this school is nice, quiet and small. 	<p>The Beacon College has about the same number of pupils as Westfield does, and the classes are still small. Pupils at Beacon College are happy, and it is a calm and quiet place.</p>

Public questionnaire responses

Specific questions asked within the responses

1. Question –

Will the contractual hours of escorts and taxi drivers be affected and how much will this cost.

Answer –

The transport team is routinely changing the routes and work of the drivers and escorts

2. Question - Considering the children under 16 currently at Westfield (thus in the 'feeder' group for 6th form) what is the greatest distance a child has to travel to Westfield, and how much longer would their day be if they eventually went to Beacon?

Answer - The proposal is for those who would have very long journeys or those with high levels of medical need to access their sixth form learning at Westfield.

3. Question - What is the breakdown of the cost savings in the proposal?

Answer - If all of the facilities provided at the Beacon College were replicated in sixth form provision at Westfield there would be a significant cost increase in regard of the land purchase necessary, construction costs per extra square metre, and extra associated costs for the equipment in specialist areas. It may lead to inaccuracy if a total cost was attributed to this as the cost of purchasing a suitable site has not yet been fully established, and the cost of construction is currently subject to inflation running at high levels with a risk of further increases to come.

4. Question - The current capacity of the Beacon College is questionable, will all of the young people wishing to attend from Westfield be accommodated or will there be a form of selection, which I understand that my grandchild had to go through?

Answer – all of the children currently at Westfield moving through to sixth form eventually, could be accommodated at Beacon College.

Broad theme	Response/comment	Answer/reply
Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This proposal doesn't allow parents/pupils to choose between Westfield 6th Form and Beacon, why not have Beacon AND Westfield, then parents can have a choice of 6th Forms (as is the case for mainstream pupils). • A critical aspect of learning is choice, the removal of Westfield Sixth therefore reduces choice. • All children should be given a choice. Westfield is a start to finish school which has less impact on the SEN child in the long run • The closure of Westfield Sixth Form will only seek to unduly discriminate against those with severe and complex additional needs • Every child deserves a choice on where they go post 16, and not all children fit in one basket. Also once again this is the council trying to take something from Leominster for Hereford to gain. • Your proposal actually means those in Hereford do not need to travel whilst those in Leominster and the surrounding areas have no choice. You are effectively taking away choice and lengthening the educational day for a number of students who may find this difficult • It would be tragic if children lost the choice to remain at such a wonderful school which meets their needs • Young people with special needs and their families are often treated like second class citizens with limited choices in life. Herefordshire Council need to rethink their spending to include offering more choice for these young people instead of just looking at the bottom line • Westfield school provides a different 6th form setting than that proposed by the Beacon college, one with full community integration • The government initiative of introducing free schools is to increase choice based on evidence of need. Currently the Beacon college is not a new provision- it has replaced an existing sixth form and is merely a new building. If Westfield school sixth form closes as a direct result of a new Free school opening, then the Beacon College is actually removing choice • The younger children (and parents) rely on the sixth formers to provide role models for their future • I have experience of teaching mainstream sixth formers , it would hugely impact parent and carers choice of school if the parents thought they would be forced to transition to another school in the middle of their educational journey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A local authority is not obliged to offer choice, but needs to be able to commission places at a setting that meets pupil needs. Beacon College meets the same range of needs as Westfield. However there will still be opportunity for some pupils to choose to stay at Westfield for post 16 studies. • Being able to make sensible choices is of course a critical aspect of learning. However, so is developing the ability to cope with change and embrace new opportunities. We are confident that post 16 pupils will experience all of these learning opportunities, supported by their teachers and other adults working with them • There is no evidence that changing schools between primary and secondary or between secondary and college has a detrimental impact on children attending special schools. • The opportunities available for post 16 pupils will be fairly applied across the whole of Herefordshire, and no discrimination will be evident • The council has no intention of taking services from Leominster, Westfield School will continue to operate. In fact the council will be making a decision on making a significant investment in a new special school in Leominster.

Broad theme	Response/comment	Answer/reply
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You claim that it will offer children a wider social group, how does this take into account those young people who need a smaller group in order to achieve their full potential? • For those pupils in Ludlow this would create an incredibly long journey time, and also a huge cost to the transport department who would have to fund the travel for these pupils, covering a 60+ mile trip a day, this could be over 300 miles in a week. • The positioning of the Beacon college in Hereford would also create a level of risk to these learners, complex needs with limited level of safety would need full support to access the immediate area, being situated extremely close to a main road. • Students are to be denied the option to stay on at this established, successful provision in favour of a new college that has no record of success • It is a requirement locally for parents to have a choice for their special needs children • I think there will be some pupils for whom a smaller more locally based 6th form is the very best option. There seems to be an advantage keeping this option available..... If it has to happen I think it would be reasonable to have a longer run-in so that new pupils to Westfield only expect to go to Hereford and have all their years in junior school to adapt and visit in preparation. Pupils that have expected for many years to continue in Leominster will find it very difficult to adapt and this seems unfair and could put their educational development back.There seems to be little lost by maintaining a space such as exists now - one room and kitchen on site to test out Beacon success and maintain a smaller option for parents to have choice • The Hereford site is tucked away, at the top of a hill, reminds me of the institutions of long ago, tucked away and hidden from view • Some pupils have complex medical needs and behaviours and adding extra journey time through the already congested traffic if Hereford is not fair. • Many pupils at Westfield cannot cope with a transition from one classroom to another. They spend months preparing them for what might seem like a minor adjustment to most - one classroom to the next. Hereford is not within their world • The council should wait until they see demand for sixth form places • The fact that both Westfield and Barrs Court premises are deemed unfit for purpose is a reflection of the lack of investment in special schools. Not so many years ago, they all faced the threat of closure, despite the fact that 	

Broad theme	Response/comment	Answer/reply
	<p>mainstream schools are often unable to meet the needs of many children and young people with SEND and learning difficulties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's not clear what will be available at Beacon that is not currently available at Westfield 	
Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many of the student attending Westfield school live in Leominster so they can walk to school or be transported by their parents. If the Sixth form closes students will have to travel to be educated. This costs time and money! • We need more choice on how far we would like to travel to school/college too! • There are certainly some at Westfield for whom the journey to Hereford would be untenable for a variety of reasons, as powerfully expressed by parents at the consultation events • Westfield isclose to residents of North Herefordshire and surrounding counties to minimise travel • The school (Westfield) is in walking distance of the town, promoting independent travel and where possible, supporting students to develop personal autonomy • Equitable travel time - I just wonder whether parents with children currently at Westfield would appreciate the disruption • I have previous experience of young people going to Herefordshire colleges being placed in such a way that is convenient to Hereford placement officers but impossible for travel from rural outskirts. This is difficult enough for a young person without a disability but nigh on impossible for pupils dependent on carers for travel. • ·Making pupils travel further is putting extra stress on them..... Some pupils have complex medical needs and behaviours and adding extra journey time through the already congested traffic if Hereford is not fair. • To support students not to have to travel unnecessarily longer journeys would be also beneficial to the students and to Hereford as a whole due to the bottle neck of traffic. • ·The earlier starts/longer days, the stress and safety concerns of travelling name just a few issues could actually be far too much for some of these young people to cope with and for the parents also • Whilst Shropshire Council may be interested in commissioning individual places at the new Beacon College, to do so and to move pupils from Westfield is unlikely to be in their best interests since they will incur 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many pupils with SEND of all ages travel quite significant distances to school, including many who attend Westfield currently. The council tries to keep travel to a reasonable and manageable distance and in line with the national guidance of no more than 75 minutes travel each way for students over the age of 11. • Herefordshire Council's approach does not just look 'at the bottom line' however funds for services across the whole county are not limitless, and have to be managed in a responsible and strategic way • Westfield School will continue to integrate successfully with the local community. This can happen equally well during year 10 and 11, as it does in years 12-14. Beacon College also works hard to integrate pupils into local communities, and liaise with providers across the county for work experience placements and other community opportunities. • A main aim of the free school initiative is to increase places available. There will remain an opportunity for some pupils to remain at Westfield School post 16, whilst also increasing the number of 2-16 places available. • In most high schools in Herefordshire – including Barrs Court 11-16 special school and Brookfield 7-16 special school, the year 11 pupils provide role models for younger pupils. I am sure that this would also be the case at Westfield.

Broad theme	Response/comment	Answer/reply
	<p>additional travel time Pupils with SEND should have the same consideration as mainstream pupils, who are not expected to have journey times of over 45 minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From an environmental point of view, travelling longer distances than is necessary for education is a poor option. • ·Not everyone can afford to travel to Hereford • ·I feel its discrimination for those with learning difficulties by expecting them to travel to Hereford for education • Many of the students attending Westfield school live in Leominster so they can walk to school or be transported by their parents. • Through travel training and support from teaching staff they (pupils) were able to walk independently through Leominster to and from a number of locations, use local train services, leading to, 2 years after leaving, being able to independently arrange to meet up with friends socially in Leominster.....attend locally provided work experience placements with minimum transport requirements. • Travelling to Hereford will be long and tiring for pupils which will not be good for their concentration • Also there are major issues with the transport. Hereford traffic is horrendous at the best of times and is particularly bad around the colleges. • They would have to get up earlier, there could be medical issues. In bad weather they will be unable to travel. • I've read the background papers and examined the map on where previous (Westfield) 6th Form learners travel from (demand). The vast majority travel from the north west of Herefordshire and further north, including Leominster • Making vulnerable young people travel a further 15 miles each way, adding another possible 2 hours to their working day is unacceptable • (My child has) anxiety on public transport and cannot travel on regular buses • Students will have increased travel times and need to use vehicles, when they are currently able to walk and develop independent travel skills • These links can happen daily, as the school is in walking distance of shops, bus station, train station, library, leisure centre; all of which are facilities they will continue to use as adults. • The 6th form at Westfield School is a vital lifeline to this children with special needs that require further education. For some, it is just not possible to travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils at all other Herefordshire special schools transition very successfully to other schools during their 2-19 years educational journey • Beacon College teaches similar group sizes as Westfield, but during recreational time there would be opportunities for those pupils that wish, to socialise in a larger group of their own age pupils with similar needs. • As part of the new proposal, a small number of pupils will be able to stay at Westfield for 16-19 education. This would include the very small number for whom travel time to Hereford would be exceptionally lengthy • Beacon College is not on a main road, in fact Westfield School is as close to the major trunk road (A49) as Beacon is to an equivalent. Neither is it 'tucked away' and 'hidden from view'. It occupies a prestigious and beautiful site overlooking Lugg Meadows, and linked by footpath to the campus for all other Herefordshire post 16 colleges • If the council decides to invest significant amounts of money improving or replacing the accommodation for Westfield School, it needs to be able to describe exactly what type and amount of accommodation is needed. Planning for a sixth form will be scheduled as a small sixth form base as described in the introduction to this document. Planning for a full sixth form when sufficient places already exist in Herefordshire will not meet the best value criteria that capital projects need to fulfil in order to have funding agreed by the council. • Beacon provides safe and compliant spaces, the right size classrooms and corridors, specialist rooms for design technology, science, physical

Broad theme	Response/comment	Answer/reply
	<p>over to the next nearest college or to be in such a mainstream school setting without the support needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of pupils will face increased journey times for travelling to the 6th form provision at the Beacon College. The cost of this travel will have to be met by the families of pupils, as I understand it there is no there is no funding available • If they have to travel to Hereford they are likely to disengage • This is a long standing, well established school and having the 6th form available to these students is crucial. What will they do without the 6th form? Go into mainstream which is not feasible for many, travel miles which can be disruptive to many of their routines, or they don't have access to any further education • Westfield Sixth Form is a specialist school and I have friends who use the services provided • Westfield Sixth Form is a specialist school and I have friends who use the services provided • I agree that a number of the students leaving key stage 4 into sixth form benefit from a wider peer group, but not all! We already make clear other options for students during their annual review and not all students enter our sixth form 	<p>education, IT, and food technology. It also provides a fully equipped life skills flat for the use of pupils to practice independence as they move towards adulthood. The outdoor spaces are of compliant size, with an outdoor learning space for every classroom. There is also access to other post 16 college environments for those pupils for whom some learning in mainstream may be appropriate</p>

Broad theme	Response/comment	Answer/reply
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disruption of moving child from Westfield to Hereford. Engaging at a local level and support of the community. • Westfield 6th form does not wish to be a mini Beacon but to offer a community based curriculum • Westfield is a smaller quieter environment. They would also be familiar with staff and the buildings. More gentle progression and transition. More suited to my child with anxiety. More connection with their local community as they gain independence • I feel once again that council are taking vital regeneration funds/builds from Leominster and give Hereford the better deal!!! • If they attended the Beacon college, and then returned to their own communitywould, by then, have become a strange environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Beacon College also engages with the local community, and will work hard to ensure that links with a pupil's own community are supported. This is intended to include opportunities to undertake work experience. • In order to help with progression and transition the Council is expecting both Westfield and Beacon College to continue to manage induction that ensures pupil confidence as they move towards the time when they change settings. This expectation would be the same for any SEND pupil changing school settings, whatever their age.

Broad theme	Response/comment	Answer/reply
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have also visited the Beacon college and where it has been built. I am disappointed by where it is situated, it has not been thought-out at all for SEND students. Many students will only access the college by transport because of the distance and its situation in Hereford. • The school offered the opportunity for our child and their peers to: 1. Gain in skills and confidence to access facilities and services in their local area. 2. Attend locally provided work experience placements with minimum transport requirements. 3. Build relationships locally with staff and users of local facilities. 6. Make links with local organisations which could provide them with opportunitiesIn particular how are the young people going to develop relationships in their local community? Taking young disabled people who are at the beginning of their lives as adults, away from Leominster will not only make their lives poorer and more institutionalised but will reduce the diversity in the town and the acceptance of disability that accompanies that diversity • A major contributor to enabling our children to function in society. My child will hopefully be able to work as a volunteer in the future using the roots that are already being laid by Westfield continuing work within the local community (who very much support the school and its pupils). • It's a well-loved school in our community. It would be such a shame if it was to close. It is very needed in Leominster. It is nice for the children to have a local school and shouldn't be made to travel further. • These (community) links can happen daily, as the school is in walking distance of shops, bus station, train station, library, leisure centre; all of which are facilities they will continue to use as adults. • The school has been a large part of Leominster community for a number of years • The sixth form offers opportunities to integrate into the local community for vital skills. Something which the beacon wouldn't • They won't get to know their local community • To remove the sixth form provision would render the previous years of quality education useless, due to the difficulty young people with learning difficulties have applying learned skills to different settings. This would also apply if they attended the Beacon college, and then returned to their own community- which would, by then, have become a strange environment • The Beacon college is not placed where pupils will be able to walk to the community and easily access the local area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Westfield School will continue to offer the opportunities mentioned. We understand that these opportunities don't just exist post-16, but for other year groups too. For any students transferring, Beacon College will also continue the good work that has been done by Westfield, in encouraging confidence, independence and relationship building for post 16 pupils. Far from increasing institutionalised dependence, we hope that this will help to develop skills and confidence that are transferrable from one situation to another, and from one community to another. • We know that Westfield School is valued by the local community, and will continue to be so for the future. Pupils who attend Westfield School and those who live in the Leominster area but travel to Beacon College for sixth form studies may still take up opportunities to continue to integrate into their home community, as will those pupils who travel from Shropshire and rural areas. • It would be disappointing to think that any education experienced by pupils at the school up to 16 would be considered wasted because a pupil has moved to another school at 16. Sixth form colleges build on previous educational achievement. • The Beacon College, like all specialist SEND settings has a strong focus on developing life skills and independence. Preparing young people for adulthood and encouraging as much integration and access to the whole community as possible for all pupils is a key strand of the curriculum • Not all Westfield pupils have Leominster as their community. Many of the school's pupils come from small villages and some from market towns in a different county. Yet the school manages to support community integration within the town of Leominster. The Beacon College does an equally excellent job of integrating their young people into the Hereford community, even though pupils may come from as far afield as Ross or Ledbury, Kington or Bromyard.

Broad theme	Response/comment	Answer/reply
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They teach them about the local community and how to live, shop and work in this community. They work closely with local charities, companies and employers to provide appropriate support and opportunities for all • Hereford is not within their world. It isn't their community • (The school spends)years preparing them by teaching them safe routes around town, introducing them to their local town and the facilities that mean something to them and their future lives. Supporting them to become adults who can access and fully benefit from their local area and community. • To move 6th form pupils out of their community, away from the contacts and relationships with local groups and businesses is disruptive and potentially damaging to young people's self-confidence and mental health • Moving schools can be traumatic for any child, so for these students it can be even worse. They live in this community • A Levels here should be preserved. SEN children/young people will be discouraged from continuing in education if this closes, how is that fair? • It would also place additional stress on parents to arrange transport and to have their child miles away when many students live relatively close to the school. •before mentioning how unlikely it is for the current staff to be cut or left without jobs after this, and the impact that will have on their livelihoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herefordshire Council transport team arranges transport for pupils for whom travel to school is necessary. There is a set contribution for travel regardless of distance from school to home. The council discusses with all special schools the implications of changing numbers of pupils as part of its commissioning responsibility. It is not likely that this will affect staff jobs, as we expect the number of pupils to increase overall given recent increases in demand. . • A levels are not studied at either Westfield or Beacon College.

Broad theme	Response/comment	Answer/reply
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is not capacity for them to go elsewhere • One of the things that has helped them is the size of the classes. I know that they would be unable to cope in bigger class sizes. My child will never be able to continue that in Hereford (or any other location put forward) • Surely some facilities need to be kept in Leominster • Make links with local organisations which could provide them with opportunities in the future for example ECHO and the National Trust at Berrington Hall. All the other students in their cohort benefitted from the unique facilities that this provision offers. It is entirely unclear how any of the examples above could be achieved by moving this provision to a setting on the outskirts of Hereford • State of the art facilities - As Westfield is having a new build their facilities would be much improved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is adequate space at the Beacon College for all post 16 pupils with an EHCP for learning disabilities. In addition there would be capacity to expand in the future. • The class sizes at Beacon College are also small. • We understand that links already made for post 16 pupils in the Leominster community, for example opportunities created at Berrington Hall, would still be available to post 16 pupils. • Children may not 'need' state of the art facilities, but they have every right to them. • The Council will need to make a decision in the near future on the investment into new facilities for Westfield School. We very much hope that in time this will happen.

Broad theme	Response/comment	Answer/reply
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Westfield School's buildings have long been of inadequate standards. To compromise for this Sixth form's 'classroom' has become the community and partner projects, they are rarely 'on site' Many of the children don't need state of the art facilities At present, Westfield 6th form has access to three classrooms, a large catering kitchen shared with KS3 and KS4 students, an independent living skills kitchen, a polytunnel, the whole outside area of school, a Courtyard area and an outside classroom 	<p>It is very unlikely however that the investment will include all of the facilities that are evident at the Beacon College, as these are already available in Hereford. The investment would however greatly improve the quality of accommodation for more pupils aged 2-16 and for a small number of post-16 students.</p>

Broad theme	Response/comment	Answer/reply
SEND Code of Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FE colleges and sixth form colleges can now recruit students directly from age 14, and so this will be an option in some cases. This should include contingency planning and the child and their family should know what to do if plans change (because of exam results for example). The current year 10's have not have opportunity to explore other options as it is not built yet and not opportunities have been given to meet the staff and explore the curriculum. This consultation is taking place after all their year 10 annual reviews. Schools and colleges should work in partnership to provide opportunities such as taster courses, link programmes and mentoring which enable young people with SEN to familiarise themselves with the college environment and gain some experience of college life and study. This can include, for example, visits and taster days so that young people can become familiar with the size of the college, and how their studies will be structured, including how many days a week their programme covers. These will enable them to make more informed choices, and help them make a good transition into college life. Schools and colleges should agree a 'tell us once' approach so that families and young people do not have to repeat the same information unnecessarily. For children and young people with EHC plans, discussions about post-16 options will be part of the preparing for adulthood focus of ECH plan reviews, which must be included as part of the review from Year 9 (age 13-14). The local authority must ensure these reviews take place, and schools and colleges must co-operate with the local authority in these reviews. If it is clear that a young person wants to attend a different school (sixth form) or a college, then that school or college must cooperate, so that it can help to shape the EHC plan, help to define the outcomes for that young person and start developing a post-16 study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It has now been proposed that the new arrangements will come into being for transition to sixth form in September 2025 In order to ensure that pupils are fully prepared for the transition, students entering the sixth form at Westfield up until September 2024 will be able to continue to the end of their post 16 studies at Westfield School if they wish. The new arrangements will not come into being until September 2025 giving ample opportunity for parents, carers and young people to be reassured that the school can meet needs. Both Westfield and Beacon College have significant experience of supporting well-thought out transition arrangements to suit groups and individuals according to their specific needs. The Beacon College has now been operating since September 2021 and a number of Westfield students have already made visits. Parents and prospective students are encouraged to arrange a visit with Beacon College by contacting the college. In line with the SEND Code of Practice, annual reviews from Yr. 9 onwards at all schools should consider all possible options for post-16 education and training and students should be offered independent and impartial advice and guidance on their next stage of learning. Beacon College is run by Accordia Trust who have successfully steered Barrs Court School including its

Broad theme	Response/comment	Answer/reply
	<p>programme tailored to their needs The proposal now means an unexpected transition for next terms year 11, which the code of practice states should be start to be prepared for in year 9. Why have the consultation so late in the year, which not enable the code of practice to be adhered to by yourselves as the local authority but also the two educational establishments involved?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Furthermore I believe that to expect parents to send pupils to a newly opened provision without any prior knowledge of the provision just weeks before the EHCP's are due to be completed is unfair. An EHCP is a legal document that requires proof that a provision can meet the needs of a young person and I am unsure how we can be expected to prove Beacon can do that in such a short space of time. • By proposing for the current year 10's being the first cohort it contravenes the SEN code of practice in two areas: 8.21 As children approach the transition point, schools and colleges should help children and their families with more detailed planning. For example, in Year 9, they should aim to help children explore their aspirations and how different post-16 education options can help them meet them. FE colleges and sixth form colleges can now recruit students directly from age 14, and so this will be an option in some cases. In Year 10 they should aim to support the child and their family to explore more specific courses or places to study (for example, through taster days and visits) so they can draw up provisional plans. In Year 11 they should aim to support the child and their family to firm up their plans for their post-16 options and familiarise themselves with the expected new setting. 	<p>sixth form to successive 'outstanding' Ofsted judgements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council transport team is working with councillors to review transport routes in order to ensure best solutions. It is recognised that in a county such as Herefordshire it is not possible for all pupils to attend a school that is within walking distance, and that some transport will be deemed essential.

Broad theme	Response/comment	Answer/reply
Other	I feel this plan which would see children from as far as Leintwardine transported an additional 25 miles a day which seems to go against the councils green agenda	