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Chief Executive:
Ms Caroline Derbyshire

4th March 2025

SAFFRON ACADEMY TRUST on behalf of SAFFRON WALDEN COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

Consultation on the proposed opening of an 'Enhanced Provision' (a specialist provision in a mainstream school for pupils with a significant level of special needs) on the Saffron Walden County High School site. This provision would be for up to 40 pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) from Year 7 to 13 that specifies cognition and learning needs.

Academy Trust and School details

The proposer is Saffron Academy Trust, on behalf of the school's Local Governing Body.

This proposal relates to Saffron Walden County High School, Audley End Road, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB11 4UH (the 'School').

Objections and comments

Objections and comments regarding this proposal should be made via this consultation form

[CONSULTATION FORM](#)

The consultation period lasts for three weeks and will end on Wednesday 26th March 2025. All responses must be received by 23:59 on Wednesday 26th March 2025.

Background and reason for the proposed change

The number of children and young people in Essex special schools have grown consistently since the SEND reforms of 2015 and there is severe pressure on special school places. The number of children and young people who live in Essex with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) has increased by 65% in the last 6 years from a total of 8,268 in 2018 to 13,676 in 2024. There was a 46% increase in Essex's special school population from 2015 to 2022. Pressures on Essex special schools are forecast to grow further between now and 2026. Between 2015 and 2020, special school places increased by 34%, with a further 18% rise expected between 2021 and 2026. Essex will need an additional 612 special school places to meet the anticipated growth of children and young people with an EHCP who need a special school place.

There are no special schools and no enhanced provisions at Secondary level. This means that children with SEND travel further to have their needs met in Uttlesford than those in other districts; in Uttlesford the average distance to school travelled by children with EHCPs is 18km, compared to an average of 8km for the rest of Essex.

Without suitable local specialist provision, a number of families choose Saffron Walden County High School, but would benefit from an enhanced provision.

This provision would support the Local Authority to meet their sustainability plan around SEN provision and the additional building required for the provision would be funded by the Local Authority.

The proposed provision would help ensure we are best able to meet the needs of children in the local area. It would also ensure that there is greater support for children at Sixth Form level. This would benefit a number of children already attending the school as well as ensuring we can be a suitable choice for other children in the district.

The published admission number (PAN) for this provision would be 5 children for each year group (Years 7-11) and an additional 15 places for Sixth Form students. This would be in addition to the existing PAN of 300 children per year in the school and so would not affect general admissions or the likelihood of a child gaining a place at Saffron Walden County High School.

The objectives are:

- A quality enhanced provision for children and young people anticipated to be aged 11-19.
- A safe learning environment within a building that is fit for purpose.
- Improved availability of facilities to support existing SEND demand.
- Reduced home-to-school journey times for children and young people who attend the school rather than another special school at greater distance.
- More effective use of public money as a result of shorter journey times as well as a positive impact on the environment.

Consultation

Statutory requirements to consult in relation to this proposal are being complied with as per the Department for Education's guidance.

This consultation letter has been circulated and made widely available. It has been sent to:

- Feeder primary schools for Saffron Walden County High School
- State secondary schools within a 10-mile radius
- All Parents/carers and staff at Saffron Walden County High School
- School Admissions at Essex County Council
- School Admissions at Hertfordshire County Council
- School Admissions at Cambridgeshire County Council

In addition, it has been published:

- On Saffron Walden County High School's website
- On Saffron Academy Trust's website

Saffron Academy Trust