



17th February 2025

Dear Local Resident

We are writing to you to let you know about a proposal that is being developed to bring the former St Benedict School playing field back into use for the purposes of education. It is proposed to develop the site, which is owned by Gloucestershire County Council, as a special school for children and young people with Complex Learning Difficulties, including autism and associated communication and interaction difficulties. We will also look to increase the amount of space available to The St George's Centre as part of this project.

There is a pressing need to increase the number of special school places for some of the county's most vulnerable learners, and this proposal builds on previous work which saw the establishment of new special schools opening in Brockworth in September 2022 and Stroud in September 2023. Plans are significantly advanced for a new special school in Gloucester and there is the need to increase the number of places available in the Cheltenham area too.

There is much that still needs to be done but we wanted to write to you at this early stage to provide you with contact details of a named officer within the council's education department who will be able to answer any questions you may have.

The proposal relates to the land to the west of the railway line (highlighted in red on the plan below) and accessed via Arle Road. The portion of land to the east of the railway line, which has historically been used as playing fields for Christchurch Primary School, is not being considered as part of this special school proposal.



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We will keep you updated as the project develops and let you know as and when more information is available and how that can be accessed. It will be our intention, in due course, to hold face to face engagement events for local residents to come along to find out more and we will liaise closely with Cllr David Willingham, as the divisional councillor for Cheltenham: St Mark's and St Peter's.

If you have any initial questions at this early stage, please contact:

Nathan Roe, Education Planning Manager, Gloucestershire County Council
Email: universalcommissioning@gloucestershire.gov.uk
Tel: 01452 427262

Cllr Willingham can be contacted in the following ways:

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