

Summary of impact from loss of SEND provision

Our planning consultants, CSJ, conclude that:

- According to 'Land Use Principles', the current lawful use of the site is for SEND facilities.
- The developer has offered no provision for SEND children on site and has failed to demonstrate there is no longer a need to retain it for SEND use.
- According to the city council, meeting SEND requirements in Bristol remains "a major challenge" and there is a "rise in demand for specialist provision" which is now "very close to capacity"¹.
- There is a duty on the Local Planning Authority to safeguard places for suitable accommodation and Development Plan Policies BCS12 and DM5 protect community facilities like St Christopher's. The developer has failed to satisfy the requirements of this policy.
- The council must consider reusing existing buildings or rebuilding to meet the increasing SEND need.

Anita Bennett, Chair of ResCare, The Society for Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities and their families.

- St Christopher's was a day and residential school for children with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities for more than 70+ years. It closed in 2020. There is currently no residential SEND school in Bristol. All children are sent to 'out of county' placements.
- The city of Bristol has one of the worst SEN provisions in the UK. They have been taken to court for breaking the law. Bristol is a mecca for SEN families.
- 200 children with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) on the waiting list for school. 45% of them want a special school.
- A further 460 children are still waiting for an EHCP, their passport to getting the education they require. The majority are seeking a special school, not simply a unit in a mainstream school.
- 75% of all enquiries for the new Grace Garden School, are from Bristol. There are 52 active enquiries. There are 191 enquiries in their archive, and they only opened last year.
- Because Bristol cannot provide in-county residential care, it spends millions of pounds on out of county placement for pre-16s, and for post-16s.
- The need for residential and respite care is huge, and the gap could be filled by using the existing homes already on site, specifically Carisbrooke Lodge and the modern respite hostel (Columbia Lodge).
- Please urge the council to consider the cost effectiveness of refusing change of use from educational establishment and insisting on SEN and residential/respite provision.

¹ Bristol Schools Forum Meeting Report, 29th March 2022 Paragraph 3.4, page 15 and paragraph 4.23