

TIPTON ST JOHN  
CHURCH OF ENGLAND VA PRIMARY SCHOOL

## **Consultation on a proposal to transfer Tipton St John Church of England Primary School to Thorne Farm, Ottery St Mary**

If you need this document in a different format or language, please contact Devon County Council's School Consultation team on 01392 382057 or via email: [schoolconsultations@devon.gov.uk](mailto:schoolconsultations@devon.gov.uk)

### **Proposal**

The Governors of the Otter Valley Federation are consulting on a proposal to transfer Tipton St John C of E Primary School to a brand new school building on a site at Thorne Farm in Ottery St Mary.

The Governors, Diocese of Exeter and Devon County Council have carefully considered all options and challenges for securing the long term future of the school and would like to hear your views on this proposal.

A relocation of an existing school to a new school building means that the whole school including all children and all staff members will be relocated to the new school.

### **The proposed new site**

The proposed new site is at Thorne Farm, located north of Exeter Road in Ottery St Mary some 2.5 miles away from the current school site. The site is in the ownership of Devon County Council (DCC) and is agricultural land currently let by DCC. The plan below shows the site location:



The site benefits from being allocated for education and community use in the adopted East Devon Local Plan. The proposed site presents relatively limited

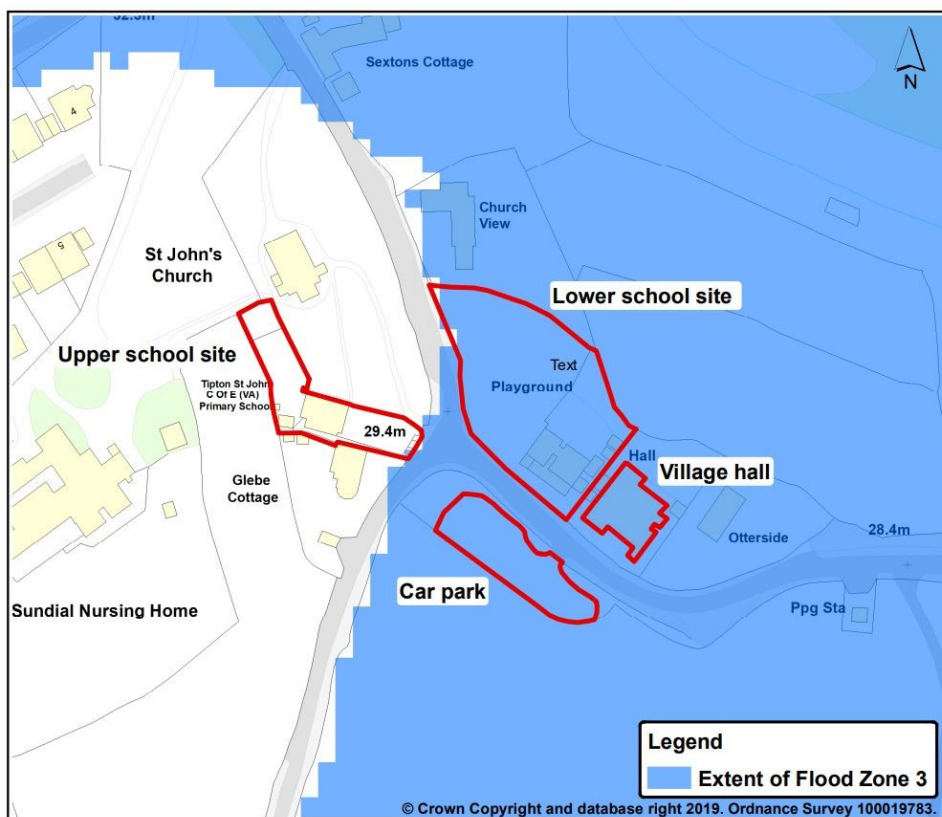
constraints and is not located within a flood risk zone. Exeter Road has scope to provide the required accessibility and visibility for all road users safely.

A significant proportion of the pupils attending Tipton St John Primary live in Ottery St Mary. There is scope to deliver footways connecting the school into the existing walking infrastructure in the town.

## Background

The Otter Valley Governors, Diocese of Exeter and Devon County Council have been working for a number of years to find a solution to the significant flood risk present at the school. Flooding has affected the school on numerous occasions and most recently in 2023.

The school is located on a split level site.



The extent of flood zone 3 and its relationship to the school is shown. Flood zone 3 is the Environment Agency's highest risk category for flooding.

The Environment Agency has identified that flooding from the Metcombe Stream and River Otter gives rise to life threatening flood risk to users of the school site and these risks are predicted to increase due to the effects of climate change. It is important that every effort is made to relocate the school to a site that is located in Flood Zone 1, "Low Probability" of flooding, at the earliest opportunity.

## Schools Rebuilding Programme

In December 2022, the Department for Education announced that Tipton St John Primary School was to be included in the national Schools Rebuilding Programme due to the flood risk assessment identifying a significant risk to the school resulting in a potential risk to life.

## **Sites considered as part of the Schools Rebuilding Programme**

As part of the Department for Education (DfE) Schools Rebuilding Programme, a Site Appraisal Report, commissioned by the Secretary of State and the DfE, has assessed the viability of four sites for the proposed relocation and identifies a preferred site to progress through to a feasibility stage. The four sites assessed were:

1. Carters Field, Tipton St John
2. Land South of Otter Close, Tipton St John
3. Thorne Farm, Ottery St Mary
4. King's School Playing Fields, Ottery St Mary

The location and assessment of the viability of each site is available in the DfE's Site Appraisal Report which has been published on the school's website via: <https://tipton-stjohn.devon.sch.uk/> and also on DCC's Have Your Say website via: <https://www.devon.gov.uk/haveyoursay/categories/education-and-schools/>

Following the review of the sites, which took into account the various constraints and planning considerations, Thorne Farm, Ottery St Mary has been recommended to be taken forward to feasibility.

Devon County Council undertook a Transport Technical Assessment to assess each of the four sites in terms of accessibility, noting potential travel patterns and the suitability of available infrastructure in terms of safety. The Transport Technical Assessment has been published on the above websites.

### **Other options considered**

Tipton St John Primary is currently a four class school. There has been consideration of reducing the size of the school to a two-class structure with the whole school operating only from the Upper Site. The Upper site has many limitations and does not have the support accommodation needed in a school. No funding would be available through the Schools Rebuilding Programme for this proposal to reduce the size of the school and move it all to the upper site.

### **Planning consent for a newly rebuilt school at Thorne Farm**

A new school would be subject to a full planning application. Under this proposal the school would transfer as a four class school with a Published Admission Number of 15. However, the new school site will be large enough to enable future expansion to meet any future requirements.

### **How would a move to Thorne Farm be funded?**

DCC will provide the school site at Thorne Farm.

Inclusion in the national Schools Rebuilding Programme means that the DfE will fund the construction of the proposed new school.

DCC would need to fund highway works required to access the site from the road.

## Early Years Provision

There will be early years provision on the new site. Tipton St John Primary School currently has a Governor-run Pre-School. Newly built primary schools usually include nursery provision. The Governors may consider establishing a Nursery rather than a Governor-run pre-school on the new site and extend this provision to accommodate 2 year olds, but this would be subject to a separate consultation.

## School Admission arrangements

The village of Tipton St John will be included in the revised catchment area of the relocated school. The exact boundaries will need to be agreed with neighbouring schools and will be subject to separate consultation. That said, Tipton St John School on a new site, will still serve Tipton St John village and therefore pupils will have priority. In addition, as a VA School, Tipton St John Governing Body is its own admission authority and therefore has control over its own admissions policy and oversubscription criteria including its catchment area.

## School Transport arrangements

All children are entitled to free home to school transport, in line with [DCC's home to school transport policy](#), if they attend the nearest school to their home address and they:

- are of statutory school age
- live more than two miles away by the shortest walking route (for primary)
- live under two miles away but all walking routes are considered unavailable

This entitlement on nearest school grounds is according to the school's location and is unaffected by a school's designated area.

Children in Devon are also entitled to free school transport to the school designated to serve their home address - provided it is still further than the statutory walking distance. There would be an entitlement to free transport on designated school grounds where the walking distance is over 2 miles to school.

## Consultation and decision-making

As set out in legislation, the transfer of a maintained Voluntary Aided school to a proposed new site which is over 2 miles from the current site requires a statutory process to take place. This process consists of a pre-publication consultation, a formal consultation – representation period, decision by the Local Authority and implementation.

## Indicative timescale for the statutory process

Subject to agreement at each stage, below is an indicative timeline.

Pre-publication consultation	1 May to 19 June 2024	
Governing Body Meeting of the Ottery Valley Federation	24 June 2024	The Governing Body will consider all the responses received and

		make a decision as to whether to proceed with the proposal.
Formal consultation – representation period	27 June 2024 to 25 July 2024	This must be four weeks under legislation.
Decision	11 September 2024	Full meeting of DCC's Cabinet.

### Consultation drop-in session

A drop-in session, open to all those interested in the proposal, will be held on Wednesday 22nd May 2024 in the Village Hall, Tipton St John. You are welcome to drop in anytime from 4-7pm. Governors from the Otter Valley Federation will be available to answer questions as well as officers from Devon County Council and representatives from the Diocese of Exeter.

### How to respond

We are keen to hear the views of the community on the proposed relocation of the school to the site at Thorne Farm in Ottery St Mary.

The closing date for responses is by midnight on the **19 June 2024**.

You can respond either by:

- Emailing: [admin@tipton-stjohn.devon.sch.uk](mailto:admin@tipton-stjohn.devon.sch.uk)  
Please mark your email 'Consultation on relocation'

Or by post to;

- Board of Governors, Consultation on relocation, Tipton St John Church of England Primary School, Tipton St John, Sidmouth, EX10 0AG

All responses to the consultation will be shared with Devon County Council unless you request otherwise. We will not send individual responses to any specific points made.

### Other information

All documents relating to this consultation have been published via the school's website: <https://tipton-stjohn.devon.sch.uk> and Devon County Council's Have Your Say consultation website via: <https://www.devon.gov.uk/haveyoursay/categories/education-and-schools/>

A paper with frequently asked questions (FAQs) and answers will be made available on the above websites during the consultation and the FAQs will be kept updated through the statutory process.

A draft Impact Assessment has also been published on the school's website and on DCC's Have Your Say consultation website. The Impact Assessment will be updated

as the proposal proceeds to take account of responses received during the pre-publication consultation and formal consultation – representation period.

Please see Devon County Council's Privacy Notice for further information on how consultation responses are managed: [www.devon.gov.uk/privacy/privacy-notices/privacy-notice-for-representations-to-school-organisation-statutory-consultations/](http://www.devon.gov.uk/privacy/privacy-notices/privacy-notice-for-representations-to-school-organisation-statutory-consultations/)