

Draft Impact Assessment



Assessment of: Proposal to relocate Tipton St John Church of England Primary School to Thorne Farm, Ottery St Mary

Service: School Place Planning/School Organisation (CCET)

Head of Service:

Version / date of sign off by Head of Service:

This Draft Impact Assessment will be updated during the statutory process with feedback and outcomes from the consultation and formal consultation – representation period.

Assessment carried out by:

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1. Description of project

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.

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 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.

2. Proposal, aims and objectives, and reason for change

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 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.

In December 2022, the Department for Education announced that Tipton St John Primary School were 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.

The key objectives are to:

- Support children and young people and their families to access safe, high quality sustainable education facilities.
- To progress any relocation of the school in accordance with Department for Education guidance and legislation.
- To ensure the delivery of sufficient and suitable school places that meet the needs of the community now and in the future.
- To make efficient and effective use of the school estate.

3. Risk assessment, limitations and options explored

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 Devon County Council's Have Your Say consultation 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 also been published on the above websites.

The site at Thorne Farm 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.

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.

4. People affected, diversity profile and analysis of needs

- Children and young people and their families who attend Tipton St John Primary: as at the Autumn census 2023 there were 74 children on roll, of which a number of children on roll have Special Educational Needs and some children have an Education, Health and Care Plan. A small number are eligible for free school meals. There is also a small number of children who have English as an additional language.
- Pre-school aged children and their families and local child minders living in Tipton St John village: there are currently 8 children on roll of the Governor run pre-school.
- All staff and governors of Tipton St John C of E Primary School: there are 22 members of staff at the school who work on a full time or part time basis.
- The community of Tipton St John village.
- Residents near to the proposed school site at Thorne Farm, Ottery St Mary.
- The proposal is unlikely to have a significant impact on any other schools in the local area.

5. Stakeholders, their interest and potential impacts

The pupils of Tipton St John Primary School will have the opportunity to learn in a fit for purpose new 21st century school building on one site with adequate external space and

modern classrooms with space for break out areas and intervention with upgraded IT infrastructure. Any new school is designed in accordance with DfE Building Bulletin 103. A state of the art newly built school will ensure an improved working and teaching environment. This project will support the needs of learners from Tipton St John and Ottery St Mary. Safe, modern school building buildings can have a positive impact on attainment, health and safety and well-being.

Some children may experience a negative impact associated with a change in routine, change of building and classroom environment, or loss of contact with familiar places or resources. Pupils may find the relocation unsettling. Any transfer to the new school site would be carefully planned and managed to minimise these risks and any disruption to children's education. An enhanced transition would be arranged for pupils who may find a relocation unsettling.

For the pupils and pre-school aged children living in Tipton St John village, there will be an increased journey time to school or early years provision. However, other pupils will have a shorter distance to school. A significant proportion of the pupils attending Tipton St John Primary live in Ottery St Mary. There is scope to deliver footways connecting the new school building into the existing walking infrastructure in the town.

The Spring 2024 School Census shows 76 pupils on the roll of Tipton St John Primary School. Of the 76 children attending Tipton St John Primary School:

23 (30%) children live in the Tipton St John C of E Primary School catchment area
31 (41%) children live in the Ottery St Mary Primary School catchment area
22 (29%) children live in other local school catchment areas.

All staff of Tipton St John C of E Primary School would relocate to work in the new school building at Thorne Farm. This will have an impact on their travel to work arrangements. Exeter Road has scope to provide the required accessibility and visibility for all road users safely.

If this proposal is approved, the community will no longer have a primary school within the village of Tipton St John. The Federation, DCC and the Diocese recognise the important role schools play within rural communities. There may be a feeling that the ethos of the school will be lost alongside the strong link between St John's Church and the school. However, the school will remain a Church of England School, retaining its current ethos and will continue to maintain its relationship with the local church. The school will attend services at St John's Church as well as engage in activities in the Village. This proposal does ensure a sustainable future of the school in a new safe location, for it to retain its excellent staff and core values and continue to serve the children and community of Tipton St John.

The proposal is unlikely to have a significant impact on other schools due to the future demand for school places in the area. The transfer of the early years provision is unlikely

to have a negative impact on other early years providers in the area. In light of the expansion of early years entitlements and associated funding, DCC is projecting an increase in demand for early years provision.

The school is on a split site with the Key Stage 2 building on the upper site owned in trust by Exeter Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd but with a section of the playground behind the building subject to a lease agreement between the owners and Devon County Council. The Key Stage 1 lower site (excluding the playing field) is leased by Devon County Council from Exeter Diocesan Trust (custodian trustee) and Tipton St John Church Hall Trust (Managers) but with the playing field made available for use by the school on the goodwill of the Trustees. The school buildings are not used for other community activities, however, the lower site playing field is used for the village summer fete.

The community hall is used by the school for daily collective worship, serving school lunches, PE lessons and the back room is hired to facilitate leadership meetings / education specialist consultations (speech and language / play therapy) and will result in a loss of income to the community hall. The village store may also be affected by the loss of footfall.

6. Additional relevant research used to inform this assessment

Autumn 2023 school census.

Spring 2024 school census.

School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013.

Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools Statutory Guidance for proposers and decision makers January 2023.

UN Convention on the rights of the child (UNCRC).

Cabinet Office consultation principles.

DfE Schools Rebuilding Programme Equality Impact Assessment, February 2022.

7. Description of consultation process and outcomes

A pre-publication consultation will be held.

A drop-in session, open to all those interested in the proposal, will be held on Wednesday 22 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.

The pre-publication consultation will be widely circulated to all parents/carers and staff, Ottery St Mary Town Council, the Diocese of Exeter, County and District Councillors, Member of Parliament, local early years providers, all schools, Trade Union representatives, Department for Education amongst others. The consultation will be published on the school's website and on DCC's Have Your Say consultation website.

The Otter Valley Federation Governing Body will review responses received to this consultation and decide whether to proceed with a statutory process. A statutory process will include a further period of consultation: a representation - formal consultation period inviting further comments and objections to Devon County Council. The representation - formal consultation period must last for four weeks under legislation and will be published and circulated widely as per the pre-publication consultation stage. A Notice will be required to be published in a local newspaper as part of this stage, alongside the publication of a Full Proposal.

In the summer term staff will engage with pupils to discuss what makes Tipton St John School special and their vision for a new school.

Background information

8. Equality analysis

Under the Equality Act 2010, the local authority must consider how people will be affected by a service, policy or practice. In so doing we must give due regard to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations across protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership (for work), sex, sexual orientation, race, and religion and belief. The Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation does not prevent the Council from taking difficult decisions which result in service reductions or closures for example, it does however require the Council to ensure that such decisions are: informed and properly considered with a rigorous, conscious approach and open mind, taking due regard of the effects on the protected characteristics and the general duty to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations; proportionate (negative impacts are proportionate to the aims of the policy decision); fair, necessary, reasonable, and those affected have been adequately consulted.

- a) Is this group negatively or potentially negatively impacted, and in what way?
- b) What could be done or has been done to remove the potential for direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or disadvantage and inequalities?
- c) In what way do you consider any negative consequences to be reasonable and proportionate in order to achieve a legitimate aim?
- d) What can be done to advance equality further? This could include meeting specific needs, ensuring equality of opportunity and access, encouraging participation, empowering people, making adjustments for disabled people and action to reduce disparities and inequalities.
- e) Is there a need to foster good relations between groups (tackled prejudice and promote understanding) and help people to be safe and protected from harm? What can be done?

All residents by geographic area

Tipton is a small village in rural East Devon. The village has Tipton St John C of E Primary School and also benefits from a popular pub, the Golden Lion, a Community Hall, St John's Church, playing fields, garage and a village store. A transfer of the school to Ottery St Mary will be a loss to the community of Tipton and will be felt as a negative impact. The transfer of the school site may make the village less attractive to families with school aged children. However, individual choices for moving to a new home are predicated on a full range of considerations. Relocating the school sustains an excellent school in the locality and therefore prospective buyers will still have the attraction of moving into the catchment area of a highly reputable school with excellent facilities. The school acts as an employer and consumer in the local area. We will ensure through the statutory process that the views of parents/carers, pupils, communities and stakeholders are considered and dealt with in order that informed decisions can be made and reported to DCC's Cabinet.

Age

Tipton St John Primary School provides for primary aged children aged 4-11. Pupils will automatically transfer to the new school building (unless this is not wish of their parent/carer or they are transferring to secondary school).

The school has a Governor run Pre-School for pupils aged 3 - 4 years of age. Early Years provision would also transfer to the new site.

Disability (includes sensory, mobility, mental health, learning disability, neurodiversity, long term ill health) and carers of disabled people

All new buildings provided through the Schools Rebuilding Programme will comply with Building Regulations, and the DfE's own specifications and standards for school buildings taking account of the needs of pupils with disabilities. This should have a positive effect on pupils and teachers with disabilities.

A new school building will be designed in consideration of the Equality Act 2010 and guidance provided in the DfE's Building Bulletin 103, taking into consideration the diverse needs of all building users with the aim of ensuring equal access for all where practical. All schools have duties under the Equality Act 2010 towards individual disabled children and young people and must make reasonable adjustments to prevent them being put at a substantial disadvantage.

Race and culture: nationality/national origin, ethnic origin, skin colour, religion and belief, asylum seeker and refugee status, language needs

The school census, Autumn 2023 records 74 pupils on roll. Some children on roll have English as an additional language. Documents published during the pre-publication consultation and statutory process will be made accessible to all on request.

The school will continue to be a Church of England School and continue to offer diversity of provision in the area.

Admission to the school will continue to be in line with the DfE School Admissions code of practice which complies with the Equality Act and the Human Rights Act.

Schools have wider duties to prevent discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity, tolerance and foster good relations. Schools have a key part to play in providing opportunities for young people from different backgrounds to learn with, from and about each other; by encouraging, through their teaching, an understanding of and respect for other cultures, faiths and communities.

Sex and gender identity and reassignment (including men, women, non-binary and transgender people), and pregnancy and maternity (including women's right to breastfeed)

Tipton St John Primary is co-educational and will continue to be. All children would be supported to receive a high quality education if the proposal were to be successfully implemented regardless of gender identity. The school will have suitable facilities in place to accommodate pupils of any gender.

Staff would continue to receive protection under the Equalities Act 2010.

Sexual orientation, and marriage/civil partnership if work related

Staff would continue to receive protection under the Equalities Act 2010.

Other relevant socio-economic factors and intersectionality

This includes:

- people on low incomes, children in care and care experienced people, armed services veterans, family background (size/single people/lone parents/family carers etc.), sub-cultures, refugee status, asylum seeker no recourse to public funds.
- housing quality and tenure, education and skills, language and literacy skills, health and wellbeing.
- rural isolation, access to services and transport, access to ICT/Broadband, social connectivity.

Also consider intersectionality with other characteristics.

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.

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

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.

9. Human rights considerations:

We need to ensure that human rights are protected. In particular, that people have:

- A reasonable level of choice in where and how they live their life and interact with others (this is an aspect of the human right to 'private and family life').
- An appropriate level of care which results in dignity and respect (the protection to a private and family life, protection from torture and the freedom of thought, belief and religion within the Human Rights Act and elimination of discrimination and the promotion of good relations under the Equality Act 2010).
- A right to life (ensuring that nothing we do results in unlawful or unnecessary/avoidable death).

Devon County Council has a statutory duty to provide sufficient education places for early years, primary and secondary education. Existing pupils who would transfer to the newly rebuilt school will have an enhanced learning environment which will be designed to ensure that it enhances the existing levels of support to all building users. The facilities and resources on offer within the new school will provide a wider range of curriculum opportunities supporting a focus on improved outcomes for children.

10. Environmental analysis

An impact assessment should give due regard to the following activities in order to ensure we meet a range of environmental legal duties. The policy or practice does not require the identification of environmental impacts using this Impact Assessment process because it is subject to (please mark X in the relevant box below and proceed to the 11, otherwise complete the environmental analysis information below):

Devon County Council's Environmental Review Process	
<p>Planning Permission</p> <p>A new school will be subject to planning permission and designed to promote energy efficiency measures, good levels of insulation and renewable energy technologies to reduce its carbon footprint. A School Travel Plan will be agreed setting out how the school will promote safer, active and sustainable travel to and from school with the aim of reducing traffic congestion and parking outside of school so far as is possible.</p>	X
Environmental Impact Assessment	
Strategic Environmental Assessment	

11. Economic analysis

- a) Description of any actual or potential negative consequences and consider how to mitigate against these.
- b) Description of any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes and consider how to improve as far as possible.

Impact on knowledge and skills

Existing pupils who would transfer to the newly rebuilt school will have an enhanced learning environment which will be designed to ensure that it enhances the existing levels of support to all building users. The facilities and resources on offer within the new school will provide a wider range of curriculum opportunities supporting a focus on improved outcomes for children.

Impact on employment levels

The construction phase will create jobs in the local area.

Impact on local business

The local economy will be impacted by the loss of income from the school. The community hall in Tipton is used by the school for daily collective worship, serving school lunches, PE lessons and the back room is hired to facilitate leadership meetings / education specialist consultations (speech and language / play therapy). The Tipton village store may also be affected by the loss of footfall. The economic benefits that a school brings to a community must be considered beneficial side effects to the main duty of a school which is to provide a quality education to its pupils.