

RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN BY **COUNCILLOR JOHN HART, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**
[Executive Posts - Democracy in Devon](#))

This Report must be completed on behalf of the relevant Cabinet Member immediately after any decision has been made. It needs to be shared in line with the guidance set out in [section 3c of the Constitution](#) (para 11) before sending to Democratic Services for publication in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

<p>Title and Summary of Matter or Issue Requiring Decision</p>	<p>(a) approving a consultation take place on a proposal to change the age range of Topsham School from 3-11 to 4-11 years of age with effect from September 2024.</p> <p>(b) if consultation at (a) is agreed, proceeding straight to a four week formal representation period providing there are no materially significant objections received to the consultation.</p> <p>In the event that such objections are received to the consultation, that the decision to move to the formal representation period be determined by Cabinet Member decision.</p> <p>(c) Upon completion of (a) and (b) above, approval of the proposal to change the age range of Topsham School from 3-11 to 4-11 years of age with effect from September 2024, providing no materially significant objections are received to the formal representation period.</p> <p>In the event that such objections are received to the formal representation period, that the decision to approve the proposal be determined by Cabinet Member decision.</p>
<p>Decision Taken (i.e. approved or not approved together with any caveats)</p>	<p>Not approved. <i>Approved/Not approved.</i></p>
<p>Summary of Reason(s) for Decision Taken (or provide a link of any report or other document setting out the reasons)</p>	<p>In accordance with the Department for Education's School Organisation Statutory guidance and legislation, changes to the age range of 1 year or more for Community schools requires a four stage statutory process of consultation, representation, decision by the Local Authority and implementation.</p> <p>Topsham School is a Community Primary School maintained by Devon County Council. The school caters for children aged 3-11.</p> <p>The proposal is to change the age range from 3-11 to 4-11 from September 2024.</p>

Topsham School currently has a Nursery Class, Little Acorns, for children aged 3 and 4 years of age, run as a Foundation Stage Unit (Nursery and Reception Class integrated).

The school would like to change the early years provision to a Governor-run Pre-School for 3 and 4 year olds.

Transition to a Governor run Pre-School would be smooth and would ensure that the provision for 3 and 4 year olds is monitored and supported by school staff. Its current location, timetable and daily systems for the children would not be affected by the change proposed.

The Governing Body of Topsham School sees the need to change the status of the Nursery provision to a Governor run pre-school to allow for savings to be made through the restructuring of staff. There must be a teacher with Qualified Teacher Status leading a Nursery Class in a maintained school. This is not a requirement in a Governor-run pre-school. The financial savings which are necessary will be made through employing Early Years practitioners to run the pre-school provision on a daily basis, rather than employing a Qualified Teacher to lead the Nursery Class.

Being Governor-run the provision will still be supported by the school. The teachers within the school who currently support the Nursery will continue their support of the Pre-school provision. The school and the federation will monitor standards and ensure that the quality of provision provided by the Pre-school maintains that previously provided through the Nursery.

Devon's Early Years and Childcare Service is supportive of this proposal and have advised the school on staffing requirements and meeting the early years foundation stage qualification and ratio requirements.

Devon's Schools Finance Service have reviewed the school's budget plan and other supporting documentation and are also supportive of this proposal.

Planning consent is not required.

It is also confirmed that no capital is required from the Local Authority, the proposal will not affect the school's net capacity or published admission number and will not put pressure on existing classroom space.

The proposal is in line with the policies and procedures contained within the Education Infrastructure Plan 2016-2033 (revised) and the statutory responsibilities

	relating to the strategic planning of pupil places and school organisation procedures.
Publicity or consultation undertaken (either before or after the decision is made)	A consultation and a formal representation period will take place and will be published on DCC's Have Your Say website as well as the school website. The consultation and formal representation stage will be widely circulated to parents/carers, staff and governors of the school including the Nursery class, as well as County Councillors, District Councillors, MP, Union representatives, all schools, local Early Years Providers, Equality groups, Parish Council amongst others in accordance with Cabinet Office consultation principles and in line with School Organisation legislation.
Divisions affected by the decision and consultation with the local Member or Members. (Confirm you have consulted the Local Member)	Wearside & Topsham The Local Member has been informed of this proposal.
Summary of Alternatives or Options considered and rejected (alternatively, attach copy of any report or other document setting out alternatives/options)	The school could retain its Nursery Class and not change the age range. However, there must be a teacher with Qualified Teacher Status leading a Nursery Class in a maintained school. This is not a requirement in a Governor-run Pre School. For Topsham School, continuing to run a Nursery Class with a Qualified Teacher is not financially viable.
Links to the Council's Strategic Plan	<i>How does the decision contribute to the <u>Council's Strategic plan</u></i> This proposal is in line with the priority to be ambitious for children and young people. Topsham School is a Good school (November 2022) and this proposal will help ensure children continue to have the best possible start in life with access to quality early years provision. Childcare enables people to work, it improves life chances for children and reduces social isolation.
Financial and Risk implications, including staffing.	A financial plan has been approved by the School Finance Officer to change from a Nursery Class to a Governor run Pre-school. Please see 'summary of alternative options considered' in respect of financial risk and staffing implications.

	<p>This proposal will have no impact on the permanent staffing. The current nursery teacher will move into the main school in September, where a temporary post is ending. The staff already working in the Nursery will remain in the pre-school as they are suitably qualified, one is an NVQ lv3 and the other an NVQ lv2. Their terms and conditions will remain the same as they are now. There will be no redundancies.</p>	
Legal implications	<p>School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 apply and a statutory process must take place to extend the age range of a community school.</p>	
Other legislative implications - including public sector equality duty (attach any Impact Assessment undertaken or provide a link)	<p>An Impact Assessment is attached and will be published when the consultation commences.</p>	
Details of any personal interest/ conflict of interest and dispensation granted to the Cabinet Member(s) involved (or consulted upon) in this decision.	<p>None.</p>	
Contact for enquiries/further information	<p>Shona Meek, Senior School Organisation Officer Shona.meek@devon.gov.uk 01392 383000</p>	
<p>Notice of this Decision will be published on the Council's website and any supporting documentation considered by the individual taking this decision and relevant to the matter shall also be made available for inspection by the public</p>		
Signature of Cabinet Member	Councillor John Hart	Date: 4 April 2024