

Statutory Consultation on a  
Proposed Change to  
Holway Park Community Primary School  
in the Academic Year 2026/27

This document outlines Somerset Council's proposed change to Holway Park Community Primary School at Shakespeare Avenue in Taunton, and sets out how members of the public can provide their views.



This is a statutory consultation by Somerset Council in accordance with the DFE's 'Making Significant Changes ('Prescribed Alterations') To Maintained Schools' guidance issued in August 2025

## **Background**

Holway Park Community Primary School is a community primary school located at Shakespeare Avenue in Taunton.

In partnership with the governing body of the school, Somerset Council proposes to increase the number of specialist places at the school's SEN unit from 40 to 50 from September 2026.

## **The Proposal**

The proposal is to permanently expand the school's onsite SEN Unit that caters for children with an Education, Health and Care Plan and a diagnosis (or expected diagnosis) of Autism Condition Spectrum, and whose needs cannot be adequately met within a mainstream classroom.

Somerset Council and the leadership and governors of Holway Park Community Primary School believe that this proposal will help the school better respond to the needs of children and young people who live in the locality.

The increase in the SEN Unit will replace some of the reduction in numbers of mainstream pupils on roll due to the falling birth rate. This means the numbers of pupils attending Holway Park site will not be increased - so the 10 extra pupils will replace the decreased number of pupils attending the mainstream school.

## **Questions and Answers**

### **What is an SEN Unit?**

The school's SEN unit is an autism centre which is a separate area of the school with classrooms and facilities offering a bespoke curriculum to children that have special educational needs which cannot be met solely within mainstream classes. By educating these children within a small specialist environment that has been designed to meet their needs, it is much more likely that their educational potential will be realised.

### **Why is expansion needed?**

There is currently a shortfall of specialist education places in the county. Most of the existing special schools, autism centres and SEN units are already full to capacity. As a result of this, Somerset Council is currently having to purchase high-cost placements from schools in the independent and non-maintained sector. These schools often require children to travel long distances from home.

### **Who will the new school places cater for?**

The expanded SEN unit will continue to cater for children that have Education, Health and Care Plans and a diagnosis (or expected diagnosis) of Autism Spectrum Disorder, or those with complex speech, language and communication needs.

### **How many children will attend the SEN unit and how will places be allocated?**

The current SEN unit can accommodate up to 40 pupils. The expanded SEN unit will be able to cater for up to 50 pupils.

Places will be allocated by Somerset Council's Statutory SEND service in consultation with leadership at the school. Children placed at the SEN unit will be local children from the Taunton locality.

### **Will school transport be provided to children attending the SEN unit?**

Yes, if they qualify under Somerset Council's published school transport policy, a copy of which is available to read or download at:

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/children-families-and-education/home-to-school-transport/>

### **How will the expansion be funded?**

The Council has received capital funding from government to increase the number of 'high needs' places. Further details are available from this website -

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/children-families-and-education/the-local-offer/education-and-learning-support/somerset-plan-for-high-needs-provision-capital-allocation/>

Somerset Council will provide the school with the necessary capital funding to refurbish and equip rooms to create the expanded SEN unit.

The school will also receive high needs revenue funding for each of the new places which will cover the SEN unit's ongoing operating costs.

### **Will the arrangement affect other schools in the area?**

It is unlikely that other state-funded schools will be affected as there are so few vacancies at special schools and autism centres in the county.

### **Informal Consultation (April – May 2026)**

An informal consultation was undertaken in April and May where immediate stakeholders (parents and carers of children on the school roll, and members of staff employed at the school) were asked whether or not they would support the proposal.

There were six responses – four were from parents, and two from staff members. Somerset Council is very grateful to all who completed the questionnaire. All six said they supported the proposal.

## **Formal Consultation (June – July 2026)**

With this document, we are now launching our formal consultation where any members of the public can have their say. Parents, carers and members of staff remain very welcome to contribute to this consultation as well.

### **What feedback is being requested in the consultation?**

Somerset Council wants to know whether members of the public would support the proposal, and whether they have any feedback they would wish to be considered.

### **Can I object to the proposal?**

Yes, you can object or comment on the proposal.

### **What if I require additional information before providing my feedback?**

Please contact Somerset Council if you require any additional information before submitting your feedback. Our e-mail is [educationplaces@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:educationplaces@somerset.gov.uk)

An officer will endeavour to respond promptly to any questions received.

### **How long does the consultation run?**

The consultation period is from Monday 08 June 2026 to Friday 10 July 2026.

### **When is the deadline for submitting views?**

The deadline is 5.00pm on Friday 10 July 2026.

Please note that any views received after this time may not be able to be taken into account although there will be a public consultation later in the year. Parents, carers and members of staff will be welcome to contribute to the next consultation as well as this one.

### **How can I provide my views?**

Please submit your views at the following website:

<https://somersetcouncil.citizenspace.com/childrens-services/holway-park-community-primary-school-2026-27>

### **Will you respond to my feedback?**

Individual queries received during the consultation period will receive an acknowledgment although will not normally receive a response.

### **What will happen to my feedback?**

Somerset Council will consider all feedback received, and share it with the school.

The feedback will be used to help inform a decision that will be taken later in the year.

If the decision is taken to proceed, the expanded number of places will be available in the next academic year, starting in September.

*Thank you for considering our proposal, and we look forward to hearing your views.*