

Date: 16 April 2021
Our ref: 3306120
Contact: Christine Coomber
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Mr R Tozer
By email

Development and Environment - Information requests
North Somerset Council
Town Hall
Weston-super-Mare
BS23 1UJ

DX 744900 Clevedon

Dear Mr Tozer

Freedom of Information Act 2000

Thank you for your freedom of information request in which you asked about proposed alterations to schools, in particular Baytree and Ravenswood Special Schools, and Gordano Secondary School.

I am writing to inform you that we have searched our records and some of the information you requested is not held by North Somerset Council. This is explained below.

The Local Authority only needs to notify the Department of Education of potentially contentious proposals as per [Making significant changes \('prescribed alterations'\) to maintained schools](#) (page 5), or if the proposal is to expand a school on to a satellite site (page 10). Otherwise, the notification is given when the decision has been made (page 29).

As a potentially contentious project and an expansion on to a second site, the Department for Education was emailed the following on the 19 September 2019 to notify them of the Baytree Special School expansion:

"Baytree Special School Expansion

We are pleased to include a link to our consultation to expand Baytree Special School from 72 to 120 places with effect from September 2021 – <https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/schools-learning/local-schools/baytree-school-expansion/proposed-expansion-of-baytree-special-school/>. The Council urgently needs to increase the numbers of school places available for children with Severe Learning Difficulties and Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulties (SLD/PMLD) due to demographic changes and an increase in the numbers of pupils with these learning characteristics. The Council believes the creation of a second site for Baytree Special School is the best way for it to meet new and continuing demand.

There is a projected increase in demand for special school places for pupils with SLD and PMLD due to demographic changes and an increase in the numbers of pupils with these learning characteristics. Since 2015, the number of North Somerset children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) has risen from 534 to 967 (as of July 2019). Currently 77% (746) of these children and young people are educated within North Somerset, with the remaining 23% (221) educated outside the area or receiving alternative provision. Additionally, by 2022, it is estimated that the number of children and young people with EHCPs in North Somerset will increase to around 1,320 or more.

The Council supports 'local schools for local children' and seeks to secure appropriate provision for pupils with EHCPs as close to their home as appropriate.

In addition to our e.Consultation, two public drop-in events will take place in our Council offices as below:

- 2.30pm to 8pm on Monday 7 October 2019 at North Somerset Council's Castlewood Offices, Tickenham Road, Clevedon, BS21 6AB*
- 2.30pm to 8pm on Thursday 10 October 2019 at North Somerset Council, The Town Hall, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1UJ*

We want to hear all views. Please tell us what you think about the proposed expansion at: www.n-somerset.gov.uk/baytreeconsultation.

If you wish to write specifically about this proposal, please send your correspondence to:

*School Organisation Officer
North Somerset Council
Castlewood
Tickenham Road
Clevedon
BS21 6FW
school.organisatiox@xxxxxxxxxxx.xxx.xx*

There is no requirement in the statutory guidance or legislation for the Department of Education to respond or issue decision notices to notifications that are sent to them. If a decision to proceed is made for the Baytree expansion, the Department for Education will be notified within a week of the decision.

The Ravenswood expansion project has not yet had a final decision made. If the decision is made to proceed with the expansion, the Department for Education will be notified within a week of the decision.

Gordano School is an academy and therefore does not fall under these regulations. Please contact the school directly with any queries. Contact details for schools can be found on the North Somerset website via the following link: <http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/schools-learning/local-schools/find-a-school/find-your-local-school/>

North Somerset Council now considers that it has complied with your request. However, you have a right to appeal if you are dissatisfied with our response. Requests for an internal review must be made in writing, and within 40 working days of this response being issued to you. When requesting an internal review, please include your reference number, the date of your original request and your contact details. Please also include an explanation of why you are dissatisfied with our response. Requests for an internal review should be sent to foi@n-somerset.gov.uk

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.
Phone: 0303 123 1113
Website: www.ico.gov.uk

I will now close your request as of this date.

Yours sincerely

Christine Coomber

Christine Coomber
Directorate Governance Co-ordinator