

WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

RECORD OF OFFICER EXECUTIVE DECISION

TITLE:	Wyre Forest School – Proposal to Increase Pupil Numbers
Decision Taken By:	Adam Johnston, Strategic Director of Children’s Services
Cabinet Member	Dr Stephen Foster, Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education and Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities
Decision Made*	To give approval for the Governing Body of Wyre Forest School to increase pupil numbers from 362 to 398 from January 2026.
Is this Report Exempt as per Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972	No
Decision taken under the following delegation:	<p>On 10 April 2014, Cabinet resolved that in respect of all future decisions on school places or school organisation changes following Public Notice of a proposal:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the Director of Children's Services be authorised to approve the proposals in respect of which no objections to the Public Notices are received; and 2. the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families be authorised to decide the proposals in respect of which objections to the Public Notices are received. <p>No objections were received in relation to this proposal.</p>
Division(s) Affected	St Johns, Wyre Forest
Date of Decision*	19 January 2026
Summary of Decision*	Approves the increase of pupil numbers at Wyre Forest Special School. Pupil numbers will increase from 362 to 398 from January 2026.
Reason(s) For Decision*	The County Council has a statutory duty to ensure there is a sufficiency of school places available to meet the needs of all children and young people living within the local authority’s area. This includes having regard to the need to secure provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

	<p>Due to the increase in the number of children and young people awarded Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) over several years, Worcestershire has seen a growth in pupils placed in Special Schools. In January 2025, in Worcestershire, 14.3% of pupils with EHCPs were placed in maintained Special Schools, compared with the national average of 13.5%. Based on forecast numbers and trends, the Council's SEND Sufficiency Report details the need for more Special School places in Worcestershire.</p> <p>Wyre Forest School has advised the Council that in order to accommodate the increased number of pupils that the school has accepted over the last few years as they progress through the school, to be able to continue to admit 30 pupils in Reception and to support the Council to reduce SEND tribunals, the school will need to increase capacity to 398 from January 2026</p>
Alternative Options Considered and Rejected	<p>The option of doing nothing or delaying delivery of Special School provision proposed is not feasible. It poses great risk to the Council in it not providing sufficient statutory school places, and also for parents in their not being able to secure a school place for their child(ren) within their local area.</p>
Summary of any financial implications	<p>High Needs Capital Funding received by the Local Authority from the Department for Education to deliver new school places will be allocated to locate 2 double mobile classrooms on the Wyre Forest School site, providing temporary accommodation for the additional pupils whilst a project to create 5 permanent new classrooms is completed for October 2026.</p>
Summary of any legal implications	<p>The Council has completed a period of public consultation on this proposal, in accordance with the Department for Education's statutory guidance "Making Significant Changes (Prescribed Alterations) to Maintained Schools – August 2025".</p>
Consultation process and results	<p>In accordance with the Department for Education's statutory guidance "Making Significant Changes (Prescribed Alterations) to Maintained Schools – August 2025", a four-week period of public consultation was carried out between 3rd November 2025 and 1st December 2025.</p> <p>Details of the published full proposals were sent out to a range of stakeholders including parents and carers of pupils at Wyre Forest School, other education providers, parent groups, local residents and elected members. A consultation document was shared on the Wyre Forest School and Worcestershire County Council websites. Public notices were published in local papers and at Wyre Forest School. All stakeholders had the opportunity, as part of the representation stage, to comment on the proposals.</p> <p>Thirteen responses were received; all were positive and support the proposal to increase pupil numbers at Wyre Forest School.</p>
Equality duty Implications	<p>A full Equality and Public Health Impact Assessment and a full Environmental Sustainability Impact Assessment have been carried out in respect of the recommendations. The assessments</p>

	did not identify any negative impacts concerns requiring further consideration.
Social Value Implications	An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out on this proposal to determine and quantify any positive or negative impact (positive and/or negative) on our staff, service users and Worcestershire residents. No negative impact was identified. A positive impact was identified for some families currently waiting for Special School places for their child or young person, as the number of places offered at Wyre Forest School will increase.
Any Conflict of Interest declared by a consulted Cabinet Member/ any dispensation granted*	None
Background documents*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools: Statutory guidance for proposers and decision makers August 2025 Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools ii) Consultation Document – Proposal to increase Pupil Numbers at WFS. Proposal to increase pupil numbers Wyre Forest School Worcestershire County Council
Signature	Adam Johnston
Reference/Date Published	20 January 2026
Monitoring Officer Review needed	No

*Legal Requirement