



***Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Children,
Education & Families***

***Monday, 19 May 2014 at 12.00 pm
Meeting Room 1, County Hall, Oxford***

Items for Decision

The items for decision under individual Cabinet Members' delegated powers are listed overleaf, with indicative timings, and the related reports are attached. Decisions taken will become effective at the end of the working day on 28 May 2014 unless called in by that date for review by the appropriate Scrutiny Committee.

Copies of the reports are circulated (by e-mail) to all members of the County Council.

These proceedings are open to the public

Peter G. Clark.

Peter G. Clark
County Solicitor

May 2014

Contact Officer: **Deborah Miller**
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Note: Date of next meeting: 9 June 2014

If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named on the front page, but please give as much notice as possible before the meeting.

Items for Decision

1. **Declarations of Interest**
2. **Questions from County Councillors**

Any county councillor may, by giving notice to the Proper Officer by 9 am two working days before the meeting, ask a question on any matter in respect of the Cabinet Member's delegated powers.

The number of questions which may be asked by any councillor at any one meeting is limited to two (or one question with notice and a supplementary question at the meeting) and the time for questions will be limited to 30 minutes in total. As with questions at Council, any questions which remain unanswered at the end of this item will receive a written response.

Questions submitted prior to the agenda being despatched are shown below and will be the subject of a response from the appropriate Cabinet Member or such other councillor or officer as is determined by the Cabinet Member, and shall not be the subject of further debate at this meeting. Questions received after the despatch of the agenda, but before the deadline, will be shown on the Schedule of Addenda circulated at the meeting, together with any written response which is available at that time.

3. **Petitions and Public Address**
4. **School Specification for New Primary School for West Witney**
(Pages 1 - 12)

Forward Plan Ref: 2014/041

Contact: Diane Cameron, School Organisation Officer Tel: (01865) 816445

Report by Director for Children's Services (**CMDCEF4**).

This report follows a public consultation run from 3 March 2014 - 13 April 2014 to gauge local opinion on the type of new school required for the west Witney housing development.

Following the consultation, the results of which are summarised and discussed in this report, an educational specification for the new primary school has been written and is attached at Annex 1 to the report for approval by Cabinet Member.

This complies with the agreed policy procedure for selecting a recommended sponsor for a new school in Oxfordshire.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Families is asked to note the outcomes of the consultation on a new school for Witney and RECOMMENDED to approve the specification as the basis for seeking academy providers for the school.

Division(s): All Witney Divisions

CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, EDUCATION & FAMILIES -

19 MAY 2014

NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL FOR WITNEY: REPORT ON CONSULTATION AND APPROVAL FOR SPECIFICATION OF A NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL

Report by Director for Children's Services

Introduction

1. West Oxfordshire District Council is developing a new Local Plan to guide development of the district up to 2031, and a significant housing development of 1000 dwellings is planned for the west Witney / north Curbridge.
2. A new primary school is required to serve the new housing development. It is expected that the new school buildings will open in 2017, but the county council is investigating the possibility of opening it in temporary accommodation elsewhere in 2016.
3. A public consultation seeking views on a draft specification for the new primary school and was held between 3 March 2014 – 13 April 2014. This report summarises the consultation, and seeks approval for the specification for the new primary school.

Background

4. Oxfordshire County Council will not run the new school. The 2011 Education Act says that all new schools are expected to be academies. This law means that they are not run by the county council except in exceptional circumstances. Instead, academies are run by independent academy trusts. These trusts can be set up by lots of different organisations, including educational specialists, employers, existing local schools, charities, religious groups and community groups.
5. Oxfordshire County Council's role is to plan for and secure sufficient school places and to find a potential sponsor for the new school. The government has set out a bidding and selection process by which new school providers are chosen. The first part of the process is to write an educational specification for the new schools in order to invite bids from potential academy trusts wanting to run it. The county council has completed a public consultation and has used responses received to it to inform the writing of the new school's specification.
6. The Cabinet meeting of 4 September 2012 approved a new process for the identification of sponsors for new academies to meet the needs of population growth such as this:

- i. Undertake a public consultation to identify the academy model to be implemented.
 - ii. Invite initial expressions of interest in running the school through DfE website set up for this purpose.
 - iii. Assess expressions of interest and then invite detailed bids from three or fewer providers to show clear plans of how they will contribute to the raising of education standards, add diversity of choice and which best fits the local requirements and meets the needs of those within groups offered specific protection under s149 Equality Act 2010.
 - iv. Assess bids against criteria and rank in order of preference. Agree a preferred option to be approved by Lead Member for Education or Cabinet as appropriate.
 - v. Submit report to Secretary of State for decision.
 - vi. Proposal developed with provider approved by Secretary of State through sharing vision of community, county and sponsor.
7. The public consultation to inform the development of a specification for the new primary school, and to hear views on school capacity strategy for the area generally, has now taken place. On the basis of this a draft specification for the new school has been developed. The purpose of this Report is to provide information on the outcomes of the consultation, and seek Cabinet Member approval to move onto the next stage of the academy process, inviting interested parties to submit outline expressions of interest to run the school, based on the proposed specification at Annex 1.
8. The expected pupil generation of the new housing in the housing development has been modeled using the council's PopCal tool, based on current knowledge about the timing of house building and the types and sizes of housing. The timing of houses could vary depending on housing market conditions.

Consultation

9. The public consultation to inform the development of a specification for the first new school was conducted by the School Organisation & Planning team 3 March 2014 – 13 April 2014:
- To gather local community views to help shape the specification of the school and choice of sponsor.
 - To act as pre-notification to potential sponsors of the future bidding rounds.
10. The consultation was publicised through the county council website and local media as well as through postcards distributed by schools, libraries and local networks. Officers held a 'Leafleting' session in Witney and delivered postcards stocks to local shops in the town centre. A briefing session was also held for local Members and for the Bicester schools' partnership.
11. 23 responses were received to the consultation. Due to the low response rate, views expressed are inconclusive and it is not possible to draw out any meaningful common theme, however 5 respondents (23%) expressed a wish for a secular school (as opposed to a faith school) while six (26%) wished for a strong community focus and a "whole child" ethos.

12. In order to secure an academy provider in good time to allow the primary school to open in September 2016 if needed, approval is now sought for the educational specification for this school, which has been informed by this consultation.

Proposed specification for the new primary school at west Witney

13. On the basis of the data available and the consultation responses, the draft specification seeks a provider for the new primary school at west Witney.
14. It is not proposed that the specification imposes restrictions on the nature of provider – e.g. faith organisations, or existing providers – given that the local consultation was inconclusive on these issues.
15. The specification includes 6 places reserved for specialist resourced SEN provision.

Next steps

16. Cabinet Member is requested to approve the draft specification attached as Annex 1 as the basis for stage (ii) of the academy provider process outlined in paragraph 6 above, the invitation of expressions of interest from potential providers. Such expressions of interest would be sought in June 2014, and short-listed by officers, with short-listed applicants invited to submit a detailed proposal by the end of September 2014.
17. A further report would be submitted to Cabinet in October 2014 to seek a decision on which provider(s) the county council wishes to recommend to the DfE for approval.

Equality and Inclusion Implications

18. Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 imposes a duty on the Council to give due regard to three needs in exercising its functions:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic, and those who do not.
19. The draft specification seeks to increase equality of access to education for children with disabilities by including the provision of additional SEN provision.

Risks and mitigation

20. There is a degree of uncertainty about the precise timescale of the school's growth as it will be influenced by factors outside the county council's control, including the housing market. To mitigate against this risk, providers will be sought who are able to be flexible in how quickly the new school will grow. Providers will be specifically asked in the application process how they will

manage these uncertainties. Until a funding agreement is signed with each provider, the county council will be able to renegotiate details of timing should conditions change.

21. If the specification proves unattractive to potential sponsors, we may not be able to identify sufficient providers interested in running the school. In cases where an academy provider cannot be identified, the DfE expects to be able to assist.

Financial and Staff Implications

22. The direct financial implication of this report is the cost of the process of seeking expressions of interest, which is planned for and met within the normal CE&F budget provision. There are no significant financial implications or risks at this stage.
23. Additional revenue funding for specialist SEN resourced provision is referred to under "Supporting vulnerable learners and those with special educational needs". This funding will come from the Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block, and will be factored into allocation decisions for this budget.
24. Local authorities are required to make provision in their growth funds to support new schools prior to opening, to cover set-up costs, as well as during the period until the school reaches full capacity, as during this period they are not able to benefit from economies of scale. These costs will need to come from the Schools Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant, and Schools Forum will be asked to approve the allocation mechanism for such funding during 2014-15.

RECOMMENDATION

25. **The Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Families is asked to note the outcomes of the consultation on a new school for Witney and RECOMMENDED to approve the specification as the basis for seeking academy providers for the school.**

JIM LEIVERS

Director for Children's Services

Contact Officer: Barbara Chillman, Pupil Place Planning Manager
01865 816459

Annex 1 Draft specification for new primary school for Witney

April 2014

ANNEX 1

Oxfordshire County Council

New school for Witney

School specification document for potential sponsors of a primary school in West Witney, Oxfordshire

1. Background

- Why a new school is needed in Witney
- Existing educational provision in this area
- Consultation

2. Details of the new school

- Type of school
- Location
- Timescale
- Size and growth of school
- Design of school and capital funding

3. Service requirements

- Delivering excellence in education
- Supporting vulnerable learners and those with special educational needs
- Working in partnership
- Building stronger communities

4. How to apply

1. Background

Why a new school is needed in Witney

Outline planning permission has been granted by West Oxfordshire District Council for up to 1000 new homes in the area to the west of Witney. As part of the supporting infrastructure, a new 1.5 form entry primary school will be opened to serve the community.

Existing educational provision in this area

The town of Witney has nine existing primary schools; another five primary schools in surrounding villages are also part of the Witney partnership of schools. There are two secondary schools, and a special school which is co-located with one of the secondary schools and one of the primary schools.

Further detail on the town's schools is available in the Oxfordshire Pupil Place Plan, available from the OCC website.

Consultation

Local consultation was undertaken by the county council from 3 March 2014 – 13 April 2014:

- To gather local community views to help shape the specification of schools and choice of sponsor.
- To invite organisations and individuals with specialist knowledge to provide evidence on local need.
- To act as pre-notification to potential sponsors of the future bidding rounds.

The consultation resulted in 23 responses.

On the basis of this consultation, the following are features which would be sought for the new school:

- High educational standards.
- Welcoming to families of all faiths and none – there was no clear preference for a faith or non-faith school.
- A key part of the local community, providing facilities and activities to local residents.
- Learning beyond the classroom, including activities such as Forest Schools.
- Close working relationship with other local schools.
- Provision of nursery places for 2-year-olds as well as 3-year-olds.

The consultation results have informed this specification, which was approved by the Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Families on 19 May 2014.

2. Details of the new school covered by this specification

Type of school

This school will be:

- A 1.5 form entry school in the first instance, with potential to grow to 2 form entry if required by local population growth.
- Age range: 2-11.
- Admission number: 45
- Total places provided for Reception to Year 6: 315 places.
- Nursery places provided: 39 full-time equivalent places.
- Inclusive of 6 places reserved for specialist resourced provision (refer to section below on 'Supporting vulnerable learners and those with special educational needs').

Location

A site has been secured for the school towards the centre of the new development.

Master plan of the new Witney Development:

Primary school site



Timescale

The new school's buildings are currently planned for completion in 2017. However, in order to support the development of the new community, it may be possible for the school to open in September 2016 through the use of temporary accommodation.

Size and growth of schools

The school will need to be flexible in how it organises classes to respond to the growth in local school-age population, including children who move to the development after the normal age of starting school.

Proposers will be expected to demonstrate how they will ensure the needs of new residents of the development are met without promoting or encouraging a large scale relocation of existing pupils from other schools.

While pupil numbers are growing, the school will have surplus accommodation, and it is expected that the academy provider will work constructively with the county and district council, and other groups, to identify ways in which this can be used to support the local community.

Design of school and capital funding

Under Section 106 of the Town and County Planning Act, 1990, the county council has negotiated a site and capital funding for the school.

The primary school site is 2.2ha (combined school and accessible community land). The site is expected to be made available to the academy on a 125 year lease, with the usual terms pursuant to the 2010 Academies Act.

The new building will be designed in accordance with the county council's approved space standards including provision of extended school facilities for community use outside school hours (as set out in the Cabinet report of September 2013, available from www.oxfordshire.gov.uk).

3. Service requirements

Our vision is for Oxfordshire to be a dynamic and forward looking place for education and learning, providing the best quality experiences for children and young people to grow up, learn, develop and achieve.

An academy sponsor is sought who is committed to providing a high quality educational experience, focusing on the environment as inspiration and context for the whole curriculum, and also to ensure the school plays a key role in building a strong and sustainable community.

Delivering excellence in education

Every child and young person in Oxfordshire should be able to attend a good or outstanding school or setting, access the best teaching, achieve well and as they become an adult, have opportunities for an independent economic and social life. Through providing the best start in life, whatever their background, children should be able to thrive at school. Education and skills provision also needs to be shaped around the needs of the Oxfordshire economy, alongside ensuring that good quality services are available for the vulnerable.

Sponsors will be expected to:

- Provide a sustainably good or outstanding school with an exciting and inspiring broad and balanced curriculum for the whole age range.
- Rigorously focus on educational standards to ensure that every child achieves their potential, and goals and national expectations are met or exceeded.
- Ensure an inclusive learning environment in which all pupils, including those with special or additional educational needs and those with disabilities, are supported and enabled to make appropriate progress.
- Develop a strong moral and caring ethos, ensuring care and support for the whole child.
- Seek out and share best practice within and beyond the school, promoting innovation and creativity in learning and teaching.
- Implement rigorous processes of self-evaluation and continual improvement, including recognising the importance of Pupil Voice in these processes.
- Secure outstanding and dynamic leadership, management and governance.
- Attract, retain and develop the highest quality teachers and support staff to ensure good or better teaching and learning, and effective and motivated workforces.
- Provide evidence of robust and effective financial management.

Supporting vulnerable learners and those with special educational needs

The needs of vulnerable children and young people should be met locally wherever possible. The new school should promote inclusive opportunities for the most vulnerable children and have a strong focus on equalities, early intervention, and supporting the needs of the local community.

Resourced provision is part of the continuum of support available to children with special educational needs in local areas. The reserved places for specialist resourced provision will primarily be for children with communication and interaction needs, physical or sensory needs. In accordance with funding arrangements for high needs children, the school will receive an allocation, currently set at £10,000 per place.

Sponsors will be expected to:

- Provide specialist support to address each learner's specific needs and to improve their progress.
- Provide a learning environment for learners to benefit from specialist small group teaching and interventions as part of a personalised learning programme.
- Ensure suitably qualified and trained staff to advise and support the local workforce to deliver quality teaching and learning experiences for children with special educational needs, and support for their families.
- Work with the local authority's Early Years Sufficiency team to help meet the local need for nursery places, including for vulnerable 2-year-olds.

Working in partnership

A key component of selection will be the proposers' willingness to work in collaboration with other providers and local partners to develop services which meet the needs of local children, young people and families in a coordinated way.

Sponsors will be expected to:

- Ensure the school is outward facing, playing a key role within its immediate community and the wider local economy, particularly through active facilitation of community use of the school facilities outside school hours.
- Engage parents/carers in supporting and encouraging their children's learning.
- Work in partnership with the county council and other educational providers to contribute towards meeting a collective responsibility to secure the best for all Oxfordshire's learners, including participating in school-to-school support, and cooperating with Fair Access protocols.
- Develop strategic alliances, partnerships and networks to better meet the needs of children and families in Witney
- Support the strategic responsibilities of the county council to ensure sufficiency of high quality school and early education places and improved educational outcomes through agreed sharing of data and information.

Building stronger communities

Under Section 6 of the Childcare Act 2006, the county council has a duty to secure sufficient childcare for working parents; the involvement of the schools in meeting the

childcare needs of the local community would be welcomed. The county council would also welcome the involvement of the schools in providing community access to appropriate facilities.

Sponsors will be expected to:

- Support the county council in delivering effective early intervention services, ensuring school readiness and supporting our most vulnerable learners and families.
- Work in partnership with wider services such as social care services, health and police to keep children safe, support families and build stronger communities.
- Provide children and young people with the skills they will need to play an active part in their local community and economy.
- Play a key role in the development of the new community, for example through opening up facilities to the community, and participating in community activities.

4. How to apply

The county council must receive outline Expressions of Interest by 30 June 2014, and requires one hard copy and one electronic copy of all documentation.

In the first instance, Expressions of Interest should be submitted using the Oxfordshire County Council New School Expressions of Interest Form. The Application Form and this Specification Document are available to download from www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/newschoolproposals

Further information is available from, and Expressions of Interest should be sent to:
Barbara Chillman, Service Manager – Pupil Place Planning
Children, Education & Families
Oxfordshire County Council
County Hall
New Road
Oxford OX1 1ND
Tel: 01865 816459
academies@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Expressions of Interest will be assessed against the requirements of this specification, and their ability to meet the following broad criteria:

- the quality of the places being added into the system, based on the proposer's vision and educational plan;

- the capability and capacity of the proposer to deliver their proposal to time and on budget, based on their expertise and experience.

The county council will short-list proposers on the basis of the Expressions of Interest received, and by 21 July 2014 will invite the short-listed proposers to submit a more detailed application by 8 September 2014.

The short-listed proposers will also be invited to deliver a presentation of their proposals, with a provisional date of 23 September 2014.

Please note: it is essential that by the time of presentation, proposers have achieved DfE approved sponsor status. Without this, their application cannot be considered. Information about this process is available from www.gov.uk/government/collections/academy-sponsorship .

The county council Cabinet will be asked to identify the preferred proposers at their October 2014 meeting, so that recommendations can be submitted to the DfE for final approval. It is hoped the decision would be available from the DfE by December 2014.