



***Delegated Decisions by Deputy Leader of the Council  
(inc Children, Education & Young People's Services)***

***Tuesday, 21 September 2021 at 3.00 pm or on the rise of  
Cabinet whichever is later.***

***Room 2 - County Hall, New Road, Oxford OX1 1ND***

Please note that Council meetings are currently taking place in-person (not virtually) with Covid precautions at the venue. Meetings will continue to be live-streamed and those who wish to view them are strongly encouraged to do so online to minimise the risk of Covid-19 infection.

If you wish to view proceedings, please click on this [Live Stream Link](#). However, that will not allow you to participate in the meeting.

If you still wish to attend this meeting in person, you must contact the Committee Officer by 9am four working days before the meeting and they will advise if you can be accommodated at this meeting and of the detailed Covid-19 safety requirements for all attendees.

**Please note that in line with current government guidance *all* attendees are strongly encouraged to take a lateral flow test in advance of the meeting.**

***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 Wednesday 29 September 2021 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**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Yvonne Rees'.

Yvonne Rees  
Chief Executive

September 2021

Committee Officer:

**Colm Ó Caomhánaigh**

Tel: 07393 001096; E-Mail:

[colm.ocaomhanaigh@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:colm.ocaomhanaigh@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

*Note: Date of next meeting: 19 October 2021*

**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

*Members of the public who wish to speak at this meeting can attend the meeting 'virtually' through an online connection. While you can ask to attend the meeting in person, you are encouraged to attend 'virtually' to minimise the risk of Covid-19 infection.*

***Please also note that in line with current government guidance all attendees are strongly encouraged to take a lateral flow test in advance of the meeting.***

*Normally requests to speak at this public meeting are required by 9 am on the day preceding the published date of the meeting. However, during the current situation and to facilitate these new arrangements we are asking that requests to speak are submitted by no later than 9am four working days before the meeting i.e. 9 am on Wednesday 15 September 2021. Requests to speak should be sent to [colm.ocaomhanaigh@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:colm.ocaomhanaigh@oxfordshire.gov.uk). You will be contacted by the officer regarding the arrangements for speaking.*

*If you ask to attend in person, the officer will also advise you regarding Covid-19 safety at the meeting. If you are speaking 'virtually', you may submit a written statement of your presentation to ensure that if the technology fails, then your views can still be taken into account. A written copy of your statement can be provided no later than 9 am 2 working days before the meeting. Written submissions should be no longer than 1 A4 sheet.*

### 4. New Primary School for North-East Didcot (Pages 1 - 18)

*Forward Plan Ref: 2021/133*

*Contact: Barbara Chillman, Pupil Place Planning Manager Tel: 07554 103618*

Report by Corporate Director for Children's Services (**CMDDL4**).

The South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse adopted Local Plans include large-scale housing growth across Didcot. The Oxfordshire Pupil Place Plan details recent and planned new schools to meet the needs of the growing population, including a new primary school located in north east Didcot, which is the subject of this report.

**The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to approve the specification for the new primary school for north east Didcot.**

Division(s): DIDCOT WEST, WALLINGFORD

**DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL  
21 September 2021**

**NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL IN NORTH EAST DIDCOT  
Report on consultation and approval for school specification**

**Report by Director for Children's Services**

## **RECOMMENDATION**

1. **The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to approve the specification for the new primary school for north east Didcot.**

## **Executive Summary**

2. The South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse adopted Local Plans include large-scale housing growth across Didcot. The Oxfordshire Pupil Place Plan details recent and planned new schools to meet the needs of the growing population, including a new primary school located in north east Didcot, which is the subject of this report.
3. Oxfordshire County Council will not run the new school. The 2011 Education Act requires that all new schools are expected to be academies/free schools. This law means that they are not run by the county council except in exceptional circumstances. Instead, academies are run by independent academy trusts.
4. This report forms part of the approved process in Oxfordshire to identify a sponsor for a new school, as detailed below. It seeks approval both for the final education specification, and for the council to embark on a process to identify an academy sponsor to operate the new school.
5. The physical design and construction of the school will be subject to the usual planning permission and capital governance processes, and is not covered in this report.

## Background

6. The host site for this planned new primary school is the 1,880-home development in the north east of Didcot, permitted as application P15/S2902/O. In the longer term, this development is planned to also include a second primary school and a new secondary school. The planned schools will also serve other nearby housing developments, including the South Oxfordshire Local Plan allocated site at Ladygrove East.
  
7. Oxfordshire County Council's role is to plan for and secure sufficient school places, and find a potential sponsor for the new schools. The Department for Education (DfE) has set out guidance on the Free School Presumption process for establishing new schools, and based on this guidance, Oxfordshire's School Organisation Stakeholder Group has approved the following process:
  - i. The county council undertakes a public consultation to decide the academy model to be implemented and finalise the education specification for the new academy, based on the DfE's model specification template, which is then to be approved by the Cabinet Member responsible for Education. The DfE is notified that applications will be sought.
  - ii. The county council invites initial expressions of interest (EoI) in running the school through the county council website, as well as through direct notification of known interested parties and through such mechanisms as facilitated by the DfE.
  - iii. The county council assesses expressions of interest against the specification and the criteria in current DfE guidance, as well as any data provided by the DfE, and invites detailed bids from three or fewer providers.
  - iv. Assessment panel to include a presentation from each shortlisted bidder, and agreement of assessment against criteria.
  - v. The county council submits a recommendation and assessments, including scoring of the proposals, to the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC), as representative of the Secretary of State, who then decides on the successful trust.
  
8. The first stage of this process is to write an educational specification for the new schools to invite bids from potential academy trusts wanting to run it. The public consultation on the draft specification for the primary school at north east Didcot has now taken place, and details of this consultation are provided below. From this, the specification for the school has been finalised. The purpose of this report is to provide information on the consultation outcome, and seek Cabinet Member approval to move onto the next stage of the process: inviting interested parties to submit outline expressions of interest to run the school, based on the proposed specification at Annex 1.

## **Proposed specification for the new school at north east Didcot**

9. The school will be:
  - A 2-form entry primary school.
  - Age range: 2-11.
  - Admission number: 60
  - Total places provided for Reception to Year 6: 420 places.
  - Inclusive of a nursery for 2- and 3- year olds: 90 full-time equivalent places.
  - Co-educational.
10. The school's catchment is expected to be primarily the north east Didcot strategic development area but may draw from a wider area to meet population pressures across Didcot.
11. The detailed specification is provided in Annex 1.

### **Next steps**

12. The 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 7 above, the invitation of expressions of interest from potential providers. Such expressions of interest would be sought from early October 2021, and short-listed by officers, with short-listed applicants invited to submit a detailed proposal by January 2022. The detailed proposals would then be assessed, and the Cabinet Member asked to approve a preferred provider for recommendation to the Regional Schools Commissioner for approval in spring 2022.
13. Running in parallel to this process, contractors have been appointed to develop the design for the new primary school, with a planning application expected late 2021; the current expectation is that the school will open in September 2023, but this will be kept under review informed by the speed of housing delivery at the development.

### **Corporate Policies and Priorities**

14. The planned new school is necessary to ensure the county council can meet its statutory duty to secure sufficient school places for the growing population of Didcot. It will support the council's vision to provide services that enhance the quality of life and to give every child a good start in life. It is included in the council's 2021/22 – 2025/26 Corporate Plan, incorporating the Capital and Investment Strategy and the ten-year Capital Programme to 2030/31, as approved by Council in February 2021.

## **Financial Implications**

15. 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 CEF budget provision. There are no significant financial implications or risks at this stage.
16. The capital cost of the school is included in the current OCC approved Capital Programme, and is expected to be fully funded from Section 106 developer funding contributions secured for this purpose.
17. In respect of Basic Need places local authorities are required to make provision to support new schools prior to opening, to cover set-up costs, as well as during the period until the school attains its agreed number of year cohorts, as during this period they are not able to benefit from economies of scale. The current mechanism for doing so was approved by Oxfordshire Schools Forum in November 2020. Growth funding is allocated by the government to local authorities through the national funding formula and included in the dedicated schools grant. The Growth Fund will be drawn upon to provide a pre-opening grant to the successful trust of £97,500 and a post-opening grant of £283,000.

Comments checked by:

Sarah Fogden, Finance Business Partner, [sarah.fogden@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.fogden@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

## **Legal Implications**

18. There are no direct legal implications resulting from this report. The report sets out the process to be followed which is contained within DfE guidance on the Free School Presumption Process for establishing new schools, including the requirement to undertake public consultation. The Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure the sufficient supply of school places; good quality places in the right place at the right time under the Education Act 1996.

Comments checked by:

Sukdave Ghuman, Head of Legal Services,

[Sukdave.ghuman@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Sukdave.ghuman@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

## **Staff Implications**

19. There are no additional staff implications resulting from this report.

## **Equality & Inclusion Implications**

20. Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 imposes a duty on the Council to give due regard to three needs in exercising its functions:



## CMDL4

- 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.

21. There are no equality and inclusion implications arising from this report.

### Sustainability Implications

22. There are no sustainability implications resulting from this report.

### Risk Management

23. 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 the provider, the county council will be able to renegotiate details of timing should conditions change.
24. If the specification proves unattractive to potential sponsors, we may not be able to identify sufficient providers interested in running the school. This has not so far been a concern in Oxfordshire. In cases where an academy provider cannot be identified, the Department for Education expects to be able to assist.

### Consultations

25. The public consultation to inform the development of the education specification for the new primary school was conducted by the School Organisation & Planning team between 16 June 2020 – 14 July 2020. The purpose of the consultation was:
- To invite comment on the draft education specification to be used as the basis of identifying an academy sponsor for the new school;
  - To act as pre-notification to potential sponsors of the future bidding process.
26. The consultation was publicised through the county council consultations website and invitations to join the consultation were targeted at local councillors, schools, and other stakeholders.
27. There was one response to the consultation, from a local academy trust. Their comment was: *"Looks sound and has built in learning from previous new builds."*

## CMDDL4

*Would it be sensible to fill the local primary schools in Didcot first before opening this one or would that provide too much travelling to the 'wrong' area?"*

28. In response to this comment, the nearest existing primary schools are All Saints CoE (VA) Primary School and Ladygrove Park Primary School, neither of which has significant spare capacity. The first phases of the north east Didcot development, which include the location of the school site, were granted Reserved Matters approval in 2018 and 2019, and are underway. By the planned opening date of the school, 400-500 houses are projected to be completed within the development. This would be expected to at least fill the available local spare places. There are three other existing primary schools within the two-mile statutory maximum walking distance for infant pupils: Willowcroft Primary School, Manor Primary School and Northbourne CE Primary School. Of these schools, only Manor Primary School has significant spare capacity, and this school is better located to attract pupils from the west of Didcot, where there is very rapid pupil population growth resulting from the Great Western Park development, rather than from north east Didcot. It is therefore considered that an opening date of 2023 is compatible with meeting the needs of the new development without destabilising the local education market, but that it is necessary to keep this date under review, and defer the opening should the housing development make slower progress than currently projected. Following the consultation, the wording of the specification has been amended to make clear the possibility of a deferred opening.

Kevin Gordon  
Director for Children's Services

Annex: Draft specification for new primary school at north east Didcot

Contact Officer: Barbara Chillman, Pupil Place Planning Manager,  
07554103418, [barbara.chillman@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:barbara.chillman@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

September 2021

# **New primary school for North East Didcot**

## **School specification document for potential sponsors of a new primary school in Didcot, Oxfordshire**

Section A: Introduction and process

Section B: The school and its context

Section C: Educational vision

Section D: Education plan

D.1 - Curriculum

D.2 – Measuring performance

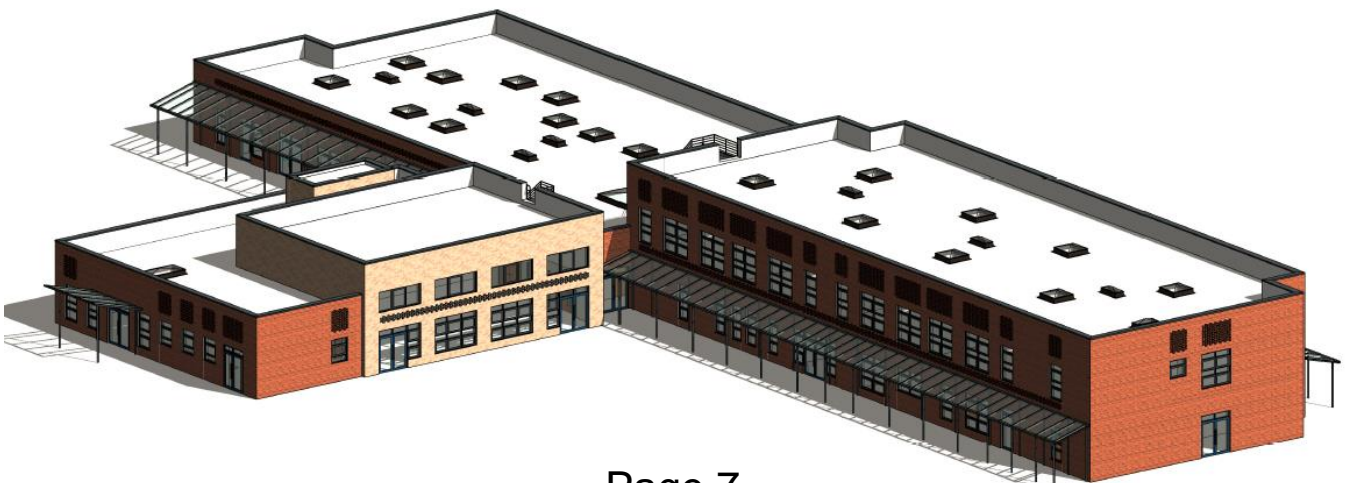
D.3 – Staffing structure

D.4 - Ensuring inclusivity, safeguarding and strong communities

Section E: Capacity and capability

Section F: Funding and costs

Section G: Impact and Equalities Assessment



## Section A: Introduction and process

Under section 6A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (the ‘free school presumption’) where a local authority identifies the need to establish a new school it must, in the first instance, seek proposals to establish an academy. Oxfordshire County Council has identified the need to establish a new primary school in Didcot, currently planned to open in September 2023 (this date will be kept under review, informed by the speed of delivery of the associated housing development).

The new school will chiefly serve a permitted new housing development of 1,880 homes in north east Didcot, construction of which is underway. This school forms part of the strategic planning for additional school capacity to meet the expected growth in pupil numbers arising from housing growth both permitted and planned in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan.

**The authority is therefore seeking proposals from appropriate providers to sponsor this new school. This new school would be deemed a free school.**

To inform the selection of a sponsor, Oxfordshire County Council conducted a public consultation on this educational specification for the new school from 16 June to 14 July 2021. The consultation resulted in one response. The consultation has informed this specification, which was approved by the Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet Member responsible for Education on 21 September 2021.

Oxfordshire County Council runs a two-stage application process, first inviting outline expressions of interest from potential sponsors, and then shortlisting up to three applicants to submit a detailed proposal. *This specification guides applicants in the information that should be included in the expression of interest and detailed proposals, and should be read in conjunction with the relevant application forms.*

### **Key Dates (subject to change):**

- 6 October – 3 November 2021: Expressions of Interest (Eoi) invited from potential sponsors.
- November 2021: Shortlisting of Eoi received, with reference to how well they meet the specification for the school.
- December 2021 – January 2022: Shortlisted potential sponsors develop detailed bids for submission by midday on 10 January 2022.
- w/b 14 February (tbc): Interviews and presentations by shortlisted bidders.
- February 2022: The county council’s choice of preferred sponsor is communicated to the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC).
- April 2022: RSC makes the final decision on the sponsor for the new school.
- May 2022-August 2023 – the county council works with the approved sponsor to establish the new school
- September 2023: New school opens.\*

\* The timing of the transfer of the school site is related to the number of housing occupations in the legal agreement attached to the north east Didcot development. At this stage, we cannot confirm whether this trigger will be met in time for a 2023 opening; if the development makes slower progress than previously forecast, the opening of the school may be deferred.

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](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/academy-sponsorship) .

In the first instance, Expressions of Interest should be submitted using Part 1 of the Oxfordshire County Council New School Proposal Form. The New School Proposal Form and this Specification Document will be available from the county council's website once the application period has opened.

Further information is available from, and Expressions of Interest should be sent to: [academies@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:academies@oxfordshire.gov.uk):

*In completing the Expression of Interest (Section A) applicants should summarise their experience of providing high quality education of a type relevant to this specification, as well as of delivering complex projects on time and to budget.*

## **Section B: The school and its context**

The adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan plans for significant housing growth across Didcot, totaling 6,300 houses between 2006 and 2027, with further growth planned immediately to the west of Didcot in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan.

Oxfordshire County Council is planning school capacity strategically across Didcot to meet the needs of recent and planned housing growth. This includes a number of new schools:

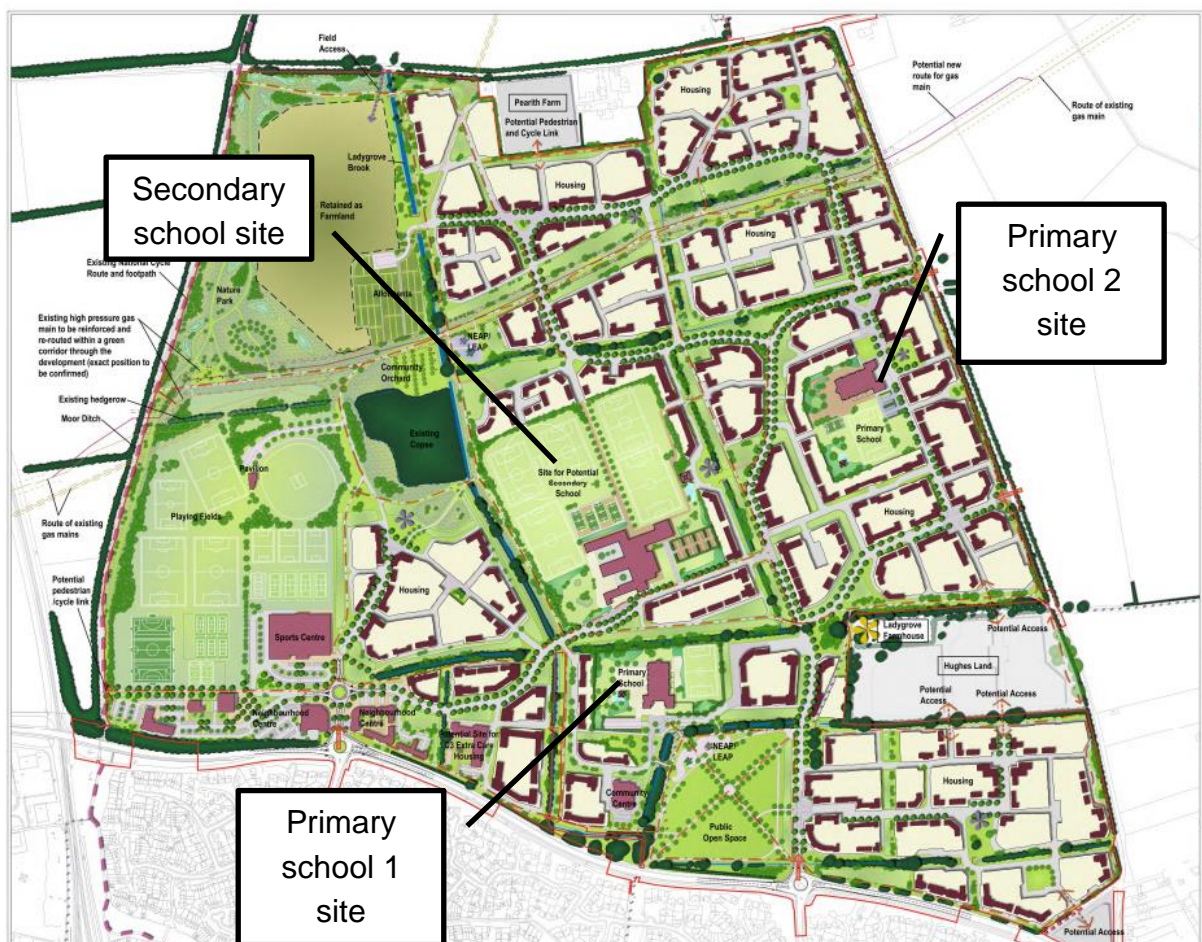
- Two new primary schools, a secondary school and a University Technical College opened between 2015 and 2018 in the Great Western Park development to the west of Didcot.
- North East Didcot is planned to include two new primary schools (including the one covered by this specification) and a secondary school.
- Up to three primary schools and a special school are included in plans for further development to the west of Didcot.

As well as the new and planned schools in Didcot, there are a community nursery school, six other primary schools and two single-sex secondary schools within the town, with further primary school capacity provided in surrounding villages. Together these form the Didcot partnership of schools, which includes a variety of governance

structures: three community primary schools; one voluntary controlled and one voluntary aided Church of England primary school; two single academy trust primary schools; with five multi-academy trusts (Activate Learning Education Trust, GLF Schools, Omnia Learning Trust, Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust and Ridgeway Education Trust) responsible for the remaining schools.

The host site for this new school is the 1,880-home development permitted in 2017 as application P15/S2902/O. The first phases of development, which include the location of the school site, were granted Reserved Matters approval in 2018 and 2019, and are underway. By the planned opening date of the school, 400-500 houses are projected to be completed within the development.

The illustrative masterplan below was submitted as part of the planning application, and shows the location of the two primary schools and the secondary school planned for this site.



This specification covers the first primary school, to the south of the development.

The planned opening date of the school is September 2023, subject to the progress of the associated housing development.

There is not yet a confirmed timescale for the secondary school and second primary school, which will also serve other housing developments planned for the surrounding area. These are expected to open in the mid-late 2020s.

The approximate postcode is OX11 7SB. The site for the new primary school is 2.22ha. The school site will be owned by Oxfordshire County Council, and 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 school is being designed and built by Oxfordshire County Council.

Design work for the new school is already underway. It will be a 2-storey building, with Key Stage 2 classrooms upstairs and Nursery/Reception/Key Stage 1 classrooms downstairs. The provisional site layout of this school is shown below:



This school will be:

- A 2 form entry school.
- Age range: 2-11.
- Admission number: 60
- Total places provided for Reception to Year 6: 420 places.
- Nursery places provided: 90 full-time equivalent nursery places. At least 12 fte of these places should be for funded 2-year-olds.
- Co-educational.

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.

It would be expected that the school initially opens with an admission number of 30 Reception places; a mixed aged Year 1 and Year 2 class may also be appropriate in the first instance, depending on how the local population is growing. The school would then be expected to increase its Reception intake to 60 in line with the local population growth, with the rate of growth being agreed with the local authority.

The school should provide nursery places from the outset, in line with the local need for provision, as advised by the county council's Early Education Sufficiency & Access team. Termly intakes should be admitted until the nursery provision is at full capacity. The school will also be expected to contribute towards meeting local needs for wraparound care and childcare.

The school's catchment is expected to be primarily the north east Didcot strategic development area, but may draw from a wider area to meet population pressures in the north and east of Didcot.

The new school will be included within the county council's coordinated admission scheme, but the successful sponsor will be responsible for consulting on, and publishing, its specific admissions policy.

Information about Oxfordshire's school admissions and home-to-school transport is available at <https://www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/school-admission-rules-and-policies>

*In completing the Expression of Interest (Section B) applicants should clearly and succinctly set out how their knowledge and experience, including of the local area, would be used to inform their plans to establish and grow this particular school.*

## **Section C: Educational Vision**

Oxfordshire County Council's vision is for an autonomous and self-improving education system; we are committed to enabling schools and settings to promote excellence and lead their own improvement. This is set within the context of a well-planned continuum of provision from birth to 25 that meets the needs of children and young people in Oxfordshire. Our ultimate purpose is to improve attainment, achievement and well-being, including the progression into employment for young people, by developing collective capacity in the county.

An academy sponsor is sought to work with the county council to achieve this vision.

*In completing the Expression of Interest (Section C) applicants should clearly and succinctly set out their educational vision for the new school. As a minimum, this must include the following:*



- *A strong educational vision and a curriculum delivery based on high standards of attainment for each key stage;*
- *Groups and organisations seen as being key partners, and plans for engagement and joint-working with those partners both during the pre-opening period and after opening;*
- *Excellent support facilities to meet the needs of all children, including looked after children, those with Special Educational Needs, etc;*
- *A commitment to excellent outcomes and high quality of teaching and learning.*

## **Section D: Education Plan**

*Applicants shortlisted to submit a detailed proposal will be required to fully explain and evidence in Section D of the proposal form how the school will achieve its educational vision under the following headings. Applicants should take account of the relevant criteria in Annex C of the free school presumption guidance, which provides more detail on the evidence which should be provided.*

### **D1 – Curriculum**

*Applicants will need to demonstrate an ambitious and deliverable curriculum plan which is consistent with the vision and pupil intake.*

The school should:

- Have a clear rationale for the proposed curriculum, demonstrating understanding of the needs of the expected intake, and an ambitious approach to meeting those needs.
- Provide sustainably good or outstanding education with an exciting and inspiring, broad and balanced curriculum across the key stages which is deliverable with the resources which will be available.
- Rigorously focus on educational standards to ensure that every child achieves their potential, and goals and national expectations are met or exceeded.
- Have strategies in place to support pupils to be successful when they enter and leave the school.
- 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.

There should be a particular focus on support for vulnerable learners and children with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities.

The school should:

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

## **D2 – Measuring performance**

*Applicants will need to demonstrate their approach to measuring school and pupil performance effectively and setting challenging targets.*

The school should:

- Have ambitious and realistic targets for pupil performance, behaviour and attendance, with a clear strategy to achieve them.
- Instil rigorous processes of self-evaluation and continual improvement, including recognising the importance of pupil and parent input in these processes.
- Identify baseline measures of pupils' attainment and put in place an assessment and data tracking system that will allow pupil performance to be monitored and continuously improved.
- Review success measures and targets regularly to improve the school's performance. This could include benchmarking assessment data with other relevant schools.
- Use appropriate data to inform teaching and drive progression and attainment for all pupils.
- Implement strategies to ensure that attendance of children matches the attendance rates of the highest performing authorities.
- Engage parents/carers in supporting and encouraging their children's learning, including through regular reporting.

## **D3 – Staffing structure**

*Applicants will need to set out a staffing structure that will deliver the planned curriculum within the expected income levels with a focus on outstanding teaching (including strategies for effective performance management).*

The school should:

- Have an appropriate balance of roles, experience and expertise e.g. senior leadership team, middle managers, SENCO, subject leaders, teachers, support staff, etc.
- Maintain 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.
- 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.
- Plan the growth of staffing within the funding available, until the school is at full capacity in line with planned pupil numbers, and have credible contingency plans to adapt the staffing structure and still deliver a sufficient curriculum if income were less than expected.

#### **D4 – Ensuring inclusivity, safeguarding and strong communities**

The school should:

- Ensure that the needs of all children are fully provided for, and that the school will be fully inclusive.
- Ensure safeguarding and well-being responsibilities are met.
- Aim to attract pupils from different backgrounds and different communities so that they all feel welcome and play a full and active role in the school.
- Be welcoming to pupils of all faiths/world views and none.
- Encourage pupils from different communities, faiths and backgrounds to work together, learn about each other's customs, beliefs and ideas and respect each other's views.
- Prepare children for life in modern Britain including through the teaching of spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) education. Consideration must be given to relevant issues, for example how the school will teach PHSE, adhere to the Prevent Duty
- Promote fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- Meet the needs of its pupils and local community through enrichment and extended services, for example, breakfast clubs, sports clubs, homework clubs and music/art clubs.
- Work in partnership with the county council and other educational providers to contribute towards meeting the collective responsibility to secure the best for all Oxfordshire's learners, including participating in school-to-school support; a strong commitment to cooperating with Fair Access protocols; and supporting

the strategic responsibilities of the county council to ensure sufficiency of high quality school places and improved educational outcomes through agreed sharing of data and information.

- 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.
- Be outward facing, playing a key role within its immediate community and the wider local economy, for example through opening up facilities to the community, and participating in community activities.
- Develop strategic alliances, partnerships and networks to better meet the needs of children and families in Didcot.

## **Section E: Capacity and Capability**

*Applicants shortlisted to submit a detailed proposal will be required to demonstrate in Section E that they have the capacity and capability to set up and run the new school, and that they have access to appropriate educational, financial and other expertise. As a minimum, this must include the following:*

- *The resources they would draw on and/or deploy to support the development of the new free school by the opening date*
- *Clear evidence that they have the range of skills and abilities necessary to set up and then run a school effectively, including: managing school finances; leadership; project management; marketing; human resources; safeguarding; and health and safety*
- *How the school would be organised and what the governance arrangements would look like, including a diagram of the proposed structures*

### **E1 – Experience and credentials**

Applicants will need to demonstrate:

- Appropriate roles, responsibilities and relevant experience to support the pre-opening and post-opening phases of the school's opening.
- A clear understanding of missing skills and experience (if any) of the team and a strategy to fill these gaps.
- Strong, relevant education expertise, for example strong school improvement experience, or substantial experience of delivering high quality education relevant to this specification.

### **E2 – Governance**

Applicants will need to demonstrate:

- A governance structure, and roles and responsibilities, that will ensure accountability and effective decision-making, and drive improvement in the new school.
- An understanding of what changes, if any, they would need to make to the existing governance structure.
- An assessment of any conflicts of interest and how they will be managed, including any financial transactions that are likely to take place between any member/trustee and the academy.
- A strategy for securing independent challenge to members and trustees.
- A plan to recruit and train high quality individuals to fill any gaps.

## Section F: Funding and Costs

Under Section 106 of the Town and County Planning Act, 1990, the county council has secured a 2.22ha site. The new school will be designed and constructed by the county council. The estimated cost of building the school is £12.9m, which will be fully funded from developer contributions secured by Section 106 agreements.

The local authority is required by the Department for Education to provide revenue funding towards pre-opening and post-opening costs of new schools.

The new school will qualify for the following financial support from the local authority:

- A pre-opening grant of £97,500.
- A loose furniture and equipment budget of £250 per pupil.
- A post-opening grant of £283,000.
- Guaranteed revenue funding for pupils in the first three years of opening, through the APT, in line with the local authority's projection of pupil numbers.

In addition, the Department for Education will provide a one-off grant payment of £25,000 to the successful sponsor to cover the legal costs incurred in establishing the new free school.

*Applicants shortlisted to submit a detailed proposal will be required to submit a robust financial plan for the school, covering the period until the school is operating at full capacity. They should detail their contingency planning should pupil intakes grow slower than expected, given the inevitable unpredictability of future housing delivery. This plan could be in the form of the DfE's School Financial Template, or similar tool.*

## Section G: Impact and Equalities Assessment

As prescribed by section 9 of the Academies Act 2010 and section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the local authority must assess the potential impact of any new school on existing educational provision in the area. The local authority must also consider whether the new school would impact on any groups with protected characteristics.

The provision of a new school in north east Didcot is necessary as the scale of local housing and population growth is expected to generate more pupils than could be accommodated at existing nearby schools, and a new school in the heart of significant new housing developments is considered to be an important element of community building. Taking into account the high level of housing growth in Didcot, the impact of the proposed new primary school is not likely to be significant in the medium to long term. In the short-term, there may be some turbulence in pupil numbers at local schools, as patterns of parental preference shift in reaction to the new provision. However, it is not considered that this would be sufficient to threaten the viability of any existing schools.

The county council has sought to minimise any risks to the existing schools by writing into the school specification that the eventual sponsors will manage school growth in such a way as to not adversely affect existing schools, and will work closely with the existing partnership of schools. In the first instance the school would operate at below full capacity to minimise any impact on existing schools. The county council will keep under review data on the need for school places, and if the local population grows more slowly than expected, would consider delaying the opening of the school.

The new school is not expected to have an adverse impact on any groups with protected characteristics.

The new school is expected to have a positive impact on two specific groups with protected characteristics:

- Children and young people: the new school will help to minimise travel distances to school, and increase choice. If sufficient primary school places are not available within the heart of the community this can affect access to out of school activities, social contact with peers, travel patterns and community cohesion.
- Children with special educational needs: the new school will be expected to deliver high quality education for children with SEND, through a fully inclusive approach.