

**CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, EDUCATION & FAMILIES -
10 FEBRUARY 2014
NEW SCHOOLS FOR BICESTER:
REPORT ON CONSULTATION AND APPROVAL FOR
SPECIFICATION OF FIRST NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Oxfordshire County Council
New schools for Bicester
School specification document for potential sponsors of a
primary school in Bicester's new eco-town**

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1. Background

About the North West Bicester eco-town

North West Bicester was identified as an eco-town by the Government in 2009 to demonstrate how new developments can be built to meet zero carbon standards. It is not only intended to kick-start a Bicester-wide transition to becoming a low carbon community but also to become a national exemplar.

The entire site will eventually be developed for up to 6000 homes and mixed use development, which could include up to 4 primary schools and one secondary

school. The first phase of 393 homes will include a primary school, shops, a business centre and an energy centre, and is currently under construction. A2Dominion is the lead developer of the site.

In addition to the new development providing the area with employment and housing, built utilising the latest sustainable technologies - great emphasis is also being placed on the social sustainability of the new place, with plans being established to ensure a vibrant and resilient community emerges, with environmental integrity at its core.

Another important characteristic of the development will be that a generous 40% of the site area will be given over to green space. The landscape design will aim to largely preserve and enhance existing landscape features and promote a rich mix of formal and informal spaces for recreation, biodiversity and food growing.

Further information on the unique sustainable features that underpin the Eco Town's development can be found from the developers' website: www.nwbicester.co.uk.

Why new schools are needed in Bicester

Bicester and its surrounding area is planned to grow by 9,000 homes over the next 20 to 25 years. The largest housing developments planned or being constructed are:

- Kingsmere in South West Bicester – 2,265 homes being built by 2022
- The North West Bicester eco-town – 5,607 homes in the draft Cherwell District Council Local Plan as well as the 393 homes permitted as part of the Phase 1 Exemplar project.
- Graven Hill – 1900 homes in the draft Cherwell District Council Local Plan
- Upper Heyford – 761 homes permitted.

There are also smaller developments proposed for South East Bicester and surrounding villages.

The number of extra children needing school places will depend on the size, type and timing of the houses, but we estimate that by 2024 there could be 1800 more primary aged children and 1400 more secondary aged children in the town.

This growing population will need new schools:

- SW Bicester – St Edburg's Primary School relocates and expands from 2014; a new school is included within the Phase 2 site, and current indications are that it could need to open by 2018, growing to 2 form entry.
- NW Bicester – based on current data, three (possibly four) primary schools will be required. The first school will be part of the exemplar site, and is the subject of this specification. The second school is currently expected to open no sooner than 2019, but this, and the timings of subsequent school(s) will depend on the progress of the housing development.
- Graven Hill will generate up to 2.5 form entry equivalent of pupils at its peak. The new school on this site is unlikely to open before 2017.
- The Upper Heyford development has already provided a free school, and no further school provision will be needed.

There will also be new secondary schools. SW Bicester includes a site for a 600 place school, and NW Bicester is expected to include a school of up to 1500 pupils.

Existing educational provision in this area

The Bicester area currently includes 16 primary schools (9 within the town and 7 in surrounding villages); two secondary schools; an all-through free school; and a special school.

School	Type (January 2014)	Admission number (2014)
Brookside Primary School	Community primary	45
Bure Park Primary School	Community primary	64
Charlton-on-Otmoor Primary School	Voluntary Controlled primary	15
Chesterton Primary School	Voluntary Aided primary	20
Finmere Primary School	Voluntary Controlled primary	7
Five Acres Primary School	Community primary	60
Fringford Primary School	Voluntary Controlled primary	15
Fritwell Primary School	Voluntary Controlled primary	30
Glory Farm Primary School	Community primary	60
Heyford Park Free School	All-through free school, opened 2013	60
King's Meadow School	Community primary	60
Langford Village Primary School	Community primary	60
Launton CE School	Voluntary Controlled primary	20
Longfields Primary School	Community primary	40
Southwold Primary School	Community primary	60
St Edburg's CE School	Voluntary Aided primary	60
St Mary's Catholic Primary School	Voluntary Aided primary	45
Bicester Community College	Community 11-18	240
The Cooper School	Converting to an 11-18 academy	220
Bardwell School	Special	n/a (52 on roll Oct 2013)

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

Proposed Studio School

At the same time as Oxfordshire County Council is planning for new schools in Bicester, a proposal has been submitted to the DfE to create a Studio School in Bicester, intended to open in 2015 (subject to Funding Agreement approval). This would provide 300 places for 14-19 year olds, and cover a 15 mile radius. It expects to draw approximately 50% of its intake from within 5 miles of Bicester, and therefore potentially offers approximately 150 additional places for the 14-19 age group to Bicester.

At the time of writing this specification, the Studio School application is awaiting approval by the DfE. Whether or not the Studio School is approved is not considered significant to this specification.

Consultation

Local consultation was undertaken by the county council from 18 November 2013 to 17 January 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.

23 individuals and organisations responded to the consultation.

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

- High educational standards.
- An exemplar of sustainability and environmental education.
- An outward facing ethos so that it is able to become an integral part of the new community.
- Collaborative working with other providers and local partners.

Full details of the consultation can be found online at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/BicesterNewSchools

The consultation results have informed this specification, which was approved by the Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Families on 10 February 2014.

2. Details of the new school covered by this specification

This specification is for the first new primary school on the eco-town development only. Future new schools will be the subject of separate specifications and approval processes.

Type of school

This school will be:

- A 2 form entry school, although it will take some years to reach full size.
- Age range: 3-11.
- Admission number: 60 once the school has grown to full size.
- Total places provided for Reception to Year 6: 420 places.
- Nursery places provided: 26 full-time equivalent places.
- Inclusive of 8 places reserved for specialist resourced provision, (refer to section below on 'Supporting vulnerable learners and those with special educational needs').

Location

The new school will serve the eco-town development to the north west of Bicester, lying within Cherwell District Council.

The school will form part of the first phase of this development, a 393 home exemplar project, which is underway and is due to be completed in 2018. The timescale of the remaining development is still to be confirmed: an outline planning application for the remaining 5600 home site is expected to be submitted to Cherwell District Council for consideration later this year

Work is already underway on designing the new school. The new school's buildings are currently due for completion early in 2016. However, in order to support the development of the new community, it is proposed that the school should open in September 2015, making use of temporarily spare accommodation on another school site and entering into a collaborative arrangement with the incumbent school regarding use of playing fields, catering etc.

Size and growth of schools

The build timescale for the housing in this development is still to be determined. 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 eco-town are met without promoting or encouraging a large scale relocation of existing pupils from other schools.

The build rate for the development is yet to be confirmed. Based on an assumption of 150 homes being completed per year, a possible timescale for the school's operational growth would be:

September 2015: A Reception/Nursery class, a Key Stage 1 class and a Key Stage 2 class.
Total approximately 45 children Reception-Year 6 plus nursery.

September 2016:	A Reception/Nursery class, a Key Stage 1 class and a Key Stage 2 class. Total approximately 75 children Reception-Year 6 plus nursery.
September 2017:	0.5 form entry size throughout. Total approximately 105 children Reception-Year 6 plus nursery.
September 2018:	Increase to 1 form entry from Reception.
September 2019:	1 form entry size throughout. Total approximately 210 children Reception-Year 6 plus nursery.
September 2020:	Increase to 1.5 form entry from Reception.
September 2023:	1.5 form entry size throughout. Total approximately 315 children Reception-Year 6 plus nursery.
September 2024:	Increase to 2 form entry from Reception.
September 2027:	2 form entry size throughout. Maximum total 420 children Reception-Year 6 plus nursery.

If the build rate is faster, the school would be expected to fill significantly more quickly. Proposers will therefore need to demonstrate the ability to respond flexibly to currently unknown and changing local circumstances.

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. This may include providing temporary accommodation for other new schools to allow them to open ahead of their permanent accommodation being available.

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 will be 2.2ha once it becomes 2FE; initially it will be a site of approximately 1.4ha. 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.

In order to meet the opening dates the design and build process for the primary school is already underway. The selected academy provider will not, therefore, have the opportunity for any involvement in the design of the school building.

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. (This is set out in the September 2013 Cabinet report, available from the OCC website.)

The building will be designed to a zero carbon standard whereby energy used for heating, hot water, lighting and power will be planned to be offset by exported renewable energy, which results in zero carbon emissions in any year. It is proposed that the primary energy source will be a community energy centre provided separately as part of the development.

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.

The vision for the eco-town includes three strands of sustainability: social, economic and environmental.

An academy sponsor is sought who is committed to combining these two visions, to provide 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.
- Demonstrate how sustainability and environmental education will be embedded into the school's curriculum and management.
- 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.
- Create, maintain and make full use of an inspirational and stimulating environment across the school, and draw upon the wider eco-town environment to support learning.
- Seek out and share best practice within and beyond the school, promoting innovation and creativity in learning and teaching, and ensure the school becomes an exemplar of environmental and sustainability education.
- 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. Specialist expertise will be available from SEN Support Services. 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 advice and support the local workforce to deliver quality teaching and learning experiences for children with special educational needs, and support for their families.

Working in partnership

The schools will be part of the Bicester partnership of schools. 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 Bicester.
- Support 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.

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 seek the involvement of the schools in providing community access to appropriate facilities.

As the first school on the new eco-town development, this primary school will have a crucial role in helping to develop the new community. It will provide one of the main hubs of community activity, giving newcomers the opportunity to meet and get to know each other through the education of their children.

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 eco-town 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 the end of Friday 21 March 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:

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Expressions of Interest will be assessed against 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 22 April 2014 will invite the short-listed proposers to submit a more detailed application by 3 June 2014.

The short-listed proposers will also be invited to deliver a presentation of their proposals – the provision date for this is Wednesday 11 June.

The county council Cabinet will be asked to identify the preferred proposers at their July 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 October 2014.