



## ***Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Education & Cultural Services***

***Wednesday, 11 November 2020 at 10.00 am  
Virtual meeting via MS Teams***

*Please note that due to guidelines imposed on social distancing by the Government this meeting will be held virtually.*

*For further information on this please contact the Committee Officer (details below) bearing in mind the information set out at Item 2 on this Agenda.*

*If you wish to view proceedings please click on this [live stream link](#). However, that will not allow you to participate in 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 19 November 2020 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

November 2020

Committee Officer: **Lucy Tyrrell**  
Tel: 07741 607834; E-Mail: [lucy.tyrrell@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:lucy.tyrrell@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Note: Date of next meeting: 16 December 2020

**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. **Petitions and Public Address**

This Cabinet Member for Education and Cultural Services Decisions meeting will be held remotely in order to conform with current guidelines regarding social distancing. Normally requests to speak at this public meeting are required by 9.00 a.m. 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 9.00 a.m. four working days before the meeting i.e. 9.00 a.m. on Thursday 5 November. Requests to speak should be sent to [lucy.tyrrell@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:lucy.tyrrell@oxfordshire.gov.uk) together with 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 9.00 a.m. 2 working days before the meeting. Where a meeting is held remotely and the addressee is unable to participate remotely their written submission will be accepted.

Written submissions should be no longer than 1 A4 sheet.

### 3. **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.

### 4. **Proposed Expansion of St Edburg's CE School, Bicester** (Pages 1 - 34)

*Forward Plan Ref: 2020/142*

*Contact: Barbara Chillman, Service Manager, Pupil Place Planning Tel: (01865) 323804*

Report by Director of Children's Services (**CMDECS4**).

This report follows the publication of a Statutory Notice relating to the county council's proposal to make prescribed alterations to St Edburg's CoE (VA) School.

The proposal entails:

- Expanding St Edburg's from 420 primary places to 630 primary places, including expanding the Nursery from one nursery room to three nursery rooms.
- Splitting St Edburg's onto an additional "satellite" site. Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 1 will move to the new site in a purpose designed new building and Key Stage 2 will stay at the current site.
- Extending the age range of St Edburg's CoE (VA) School from 3-11 to 2-11.

The statutory proposal was published on 25 September, and the 4-week consultation period ran until 23 October. A decision is now required within two months of the statutory representation period as to whether to approve the proposal.

***The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to approve the proposal to make the following prescribed alterations to St Edburg's CoE (VA) School effect from 1 September 2023:***

- ***expand St Edburg's CoE (VA) School onto an additional (satellite) site;***
  - ***increase the school's capacity from 2 forms of entry to 3 forms of entry;***
  - ***reduce the lower age range by one year to include 2-year-olds.***
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Division(s): BICESTER WEST

## **CABINET MEMBER EDUCATION & CULTURAL SERVICES**

**11 November 2020**

### **REPORT ON THE PROPOSED EXPANSION OF ST EDBURG'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND (VA) SCHOOL**

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

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. **The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to approve the proposal to make the following prescribed alterations to St Edburg's CoE (VA) School effect from 1 September 2023:**
  - **expand St Edburg's CoE (VA) School onto an additional (satellite) site;**
  - **increase the school's capacity from 2 forms of entry to 3 forms of entry;**
  - **reduce the lower age range by one year to include 2-year-olds.**

#### **Executive Summary**

2. Under Section 19 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, a local authority can propose the expansion of all categories of maintained school, including onto a satellite site. It can also propose a change in age range of up to 2 years for a voluntary school outside of a statutory process. It is proposed to:
  - Expand the school from 2 form entry (420 primary places) to 3 form entry (630 primary places) including expanding the Nursery from one nursery room to three nursery rooms.
  - Split St Edburg's onto an additional "satellite" site. A purpose designed new school building on the satellite site would accommodate Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 1, and Key Stage 2 would stay at the current site.
  - Extend the age range of St Edburg's CoE (VA) School from 3-11 to 2-11 (this does not require statutory approval, but is included within this proposal to give a complete picture of the changes planned).
3. The expansion of the school requires a statutory consultation and decision-making process. The decision must be made in accordance with the *Education and Inspections Act 2006* (as amended), *The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013* and decision makers must have regard to the statutory guidance, "*Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools*", October 2018 ("the Guidance"). Further details of the relevant legislation and guidance are set out below.

4. A statutory notice has been published, and the required representation period has ended. 18 responses were received, of which, 8 supported the expansion onto a split site and 8 objected; 10 supported the change in age range and 3 objected.

## **Introduction**

5. This report follows the publication of a Statutory Proposal/Notice (Stage 1) and a Representation (Stage 2 formal consultation) period relating to the county council's 'prescribed alteration' proposal to expand St Edburg's CoE (VA) School. The proposal is made with the support of the school's leadership team and Governing Body, and the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education. The Cabinet Member is now required to make a decision on the proposals in accordance with the statutory prescribed alteration procedures.
6. The proposal aims to:
  - Ensure sufficient primary and nursery education places for the growing population of the Kingsmere development in SW Bicester.
  - Increase the percentage of families living in SW Bicester who are able to secure a place at their preferred primary school.
  - Be supportive of high educational standards.
  - Support the long-term financial viability of Bicester's primary schools.
7. The details and rationale for the proposal are presented in the full Statutory Proposal (Annex 2).
8. Although there is no longer a statutory 'pre-publication' consultation period for prescribed alteration changes, there is a strong expectation that schools and local authorities will consult interested parties in developing their proposal prior to publication, to take into account all relevant considerations. In accordance with this expectation, Oxfordshire County Council ran an initial public consultation between 15 June and 13 July 2020. The initial consultation, to which there were 71 responses, invited comments on two options: a separate new 1 form entry primary school, or the expansion of St Edburg's CE School from 2 form entry to 3 form entry, through the mechanism of splitting it across two sites. The responses to the initial consultation helped shape the published proposal, and are summarised in section 7 of the full proposal (Annex 2).

## **Publication of the proposal**

9. The statutory notice (Annex 1) was published in the Bicester Advertiser on 25 September 2020 and was also posted on the county council website. The Representation period ran until 23 October 2020, which is the statutory 4-week period required under the relevant legislation. The statutory notice was accompanied by a Full Proposal document (Annex 2), which was available to read online at the Oxfordshire County Council public website, or by request.

## Representations

10. 18 responses were received during the 4-week statutory Representation period. Of these responses:
  - 8 supported the expansion onto a satellite site and 8 objected;
  - 10 supported the change in age range and 3 objected.
11. Two respondents questioned why the council was now proposing the expansion of St Edburg's onto a satellite site when the majority of responses to the informal consultation preferred the option of a separate new school. The reasons for the council's proposal are set out in the proposal document (Annex 2, section 8) and outlined in paragraph 13 below, and relate largely to the greater degree of financial sustainability that could be achieved through one larger school than the establishment of a separate new 1 form entry school. The initial consultation helped shape the proposal which was published.
12. Four respondents raised concerns about the difficulties for families with children on both sites. Three of these considered that it was not realistic to expect children to walk between sites, especially in bad weather. The Kingsmere Residents Association raised the need for a safe crossing point across Whitelands Way.
  - St Edburg's would operate a walking bus – parents can drop off at one site (the new site) and school staff would walk the older children over to the existing site. (0.5 miles – 10-15 minutes' walk, mostly on a dedicated pedestrian/cycle path.)
  - The walking bus will enable older primary children to establish healthy, safe and sustainable travel to school patterns under the supervision of school staff. It is hoped that this would continue after they transfer to secondary school.
  - The school will have flexible start and finish times to allow for travel between sites, and will offer an extended day for wraparound care at both sites.
13. Four respondents raised concerns that creating a satellite to the existing school would create less choice, competition and diversity than two separate schools, or that residents moving into the development had done so expecting a second school.
  - The alternative to the new school site being operated as a satellite of St Edburg's would be to seek to establish a separate new 1 form entry primary school. This approach would entail risks. The Department for Education has to sign a funding agreement with the academy sponsor to open a new school and their guidance is that a 1 form entry school can be too small to be financially viable. There is a risk they would refuse to let a new 1 form entry primary school open.
  - A new school would take several years to get up to full size, and hence full budget (school budgets are primarily based on pupil numbers), so would be more limited in what it can offer than a larger school.

- Establishing a satellite to an existing school does not create the same challenges to financial viability as opening a brand-new school. St Edburg's is already established and operates with a substantial budget; it would receive additional funding to cover the costs of growth. As one school, St Edburg's would have more flexibility with its budget to react to fluctuations in pupil numbers.
  - As an existing school, with new accommodation in place from 2023, St Edburg's would be more likely to be able to open additional classes for older year groups if there is demand; whereas a new school usually grows from the bottom up, which means that older children moving into the area would not be able to attend.
14. Three respondents raised concerns that a split site would have a detrimental impact on the school, such as harming the community feeling of the school, creating a Year 2/3 transition point which could be difficult for some children, damaging educational standards, being difficult for the school to manage or increasing the school's running costs.
- The management of St Edburg's has carefully considered the potential costs and benefits of this proposal. They consider that creating a satellite school will enable St Edburg's to create a "small school" environment while benefitting from large school economies of scale, and are confident that a split site would allow an innovative approach to tailoring educational provision to the specific needs of the age groups. Younger children would not feel overwhelmed in an environment designed at their scale, rather than one suited to children much older. The use of the Key Stage 2 site could be adapted to better prepare children for secondary school.
  - In addition, staff would benefit from more development opportunities, and greater economies of scale would free up resources to benefit education.
  - Although children would spend most of their time on one of the sites, sometimes they would use the other site – for example, sometimes the whole school would come together for events and celebrations, to maintain a "one school" community experience.
15. Three respondents considered there was no need for additional places for 2-year-olds places within the development, but two respondents welcomed the additional provision.
- It is now standard in new Oxfordshire primary schools for them to admit to nursery from age 2, and where possible, places for 2-year-olds are also being created in existing schools.
  - There is already a shortage of nursery places for funded 2-year-olds in Bicester and the number of children qualifying for free 2-year-old places is expected to rise. The shortfall in places will be made worse as the population increases and potentially lead to some families missing out on their child's entitlement to a funded 2s place.
  - Creating additional 2-year-old places as part of the new school provision will ensure a spread of funded places best located to serve the new community. Existing provision will see a growth in demand for fee-paid 2-year-old places, and most 2-year-olds will continue to attend other providers, but St Edburg's would now be another option.



16. The responses included one from the local MP, attached as Annex 4, who welcomed the planned additional capacity and the extension of age range to accommodate two-year-olds, and considered that the proposed walking bus and flexible start dates would help reduce difficulties related to traffic and parking.

## Legal background

17. Local authorities have a statutory duty under section 14 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure there are sufficient schools for their area. This duty will be met with the expansion of St Edburg's CoE (VA) School, in order to address the expected increase in demand for places across SW Bicester from housing growth in this area.
18. Expansion of schools is covered by *The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013* ('the Prescribed Alterations Regulations') which should be read in conjunction with Parts 2 and 3 and Schedule 3 of the *Education and Inspections Act (EIA) 2006* (as amended by the *Education Act (EA) 2011*) and *the Prescribed Alterations Regulations*.
19. The expansion of a maintained school is subject to the "Guidance", as set out in "*Making Significant Changes ('Prescribed Alterations') to maintained schools*" published October 2018. This Guidance is for proposers and decision-makers. The Guidance states that the statutory proposal must contain sufficient information for interested parties to make a decision on whether to support or challenge the proposed change. The proposal should be accessible to all interested parties and should therefore use 'plain English'. The full proposal must be published on a website (e.g. the school or LA's website) along with a statement setting out:
  - (a) how copies of the proposal may be obtained;
  - (b) that anybody can object to, or comment on, the proposal;
  - (c) the date that the representation period ends;
  - (d) and the address to which objections or comments should be submitted.A brief notice (including details on how the full proposal can be accessed e.g. the website address) must be published in a local newspaper. Within one week of the date of publication on the website, the proposer must send a copy of the proposal and the information set out in the paragraph above to the governing body and any other body or person that the proposer thinks are appropriate.
20. The Guidance requires that LAs should copy any proposal to expand a school onto a satellite site to the Department for Education for monitoring purposes. The proposal was sent to the Department for Education ahead of publication.

21. The representation period must last for four weeks from the date of the publication. During this period, any person or organisation can submit comments on the proposal to the LA to be taken into account by the decision-maker.
22. The county council confirms that it has adhered to the above Guidance.

### **Decision-making**

23. The decision-making power in terms of determining the proposal in this case lies with the Cabinet Member for Education & Cultural Services. In considering the proposals for a school expansion, the Cabinet Member can decide to:
  - reject the proposals;
  - approve the proposals without modifications;
  - approve the proposals with such modifications as the local authority thinks desirable, having consulted the governing body;
  - approve the proposal – with or without modification – subject to certain conditions (such as the granting of planning permission) being met.
24. Where a LA is the decision maker, it must make a decision within a period of two months of the end of the representation period. Where a decision is not made within this time frame, the LA must refer the proposal to the Schools Adjudicator for a decision.
25. The *Guidance* states that “decision-makers will need to be satisfied that the appropriate fair and open local consultation and/or representation period has been carried out and that the proposer has given full consideration to all the responses received. Decision-makers should not simply take account of the numbers of people expressing a particular view. Instead, they should give the greatest weight to responses from those stakeholders likely to be most affected by a proposal – especially parents of children at the affected school(s)”.
26. The *Guidance* sets out the following factors which should be considered in deciding this proposal.
27. **Education standards and diversity of provision:** Decision-makers should consider the quality and diversity of schools in the relevant area and whether the proposal will meet or affect the needs of parents; raise local standards and narrow attainment gaps.
28. St Edburg’s CoE (VA) School has an Ofsted rating of “Good”. The guidance states that it is expected that additional places will only be provided at schools that have an overall Ofsted rating of “Good” or “Outstanding”. The expansion will be supportive of high educational standards and parental choice and would increase the number of places available at good schools.
29. While the creation of a satellite to an existing school instead of establishing a separate new school does not increase diversity of provision, the scale of additional capacity required (1 form of entry) means that an attempt to

establish a separate new school may not be successful, and could be detrimental to educational provision in the area.

30. **Equal opportunities issues:** The decision-maker must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which requires them to have “due regard” to the need to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it. The characteristics that are protected in relation to the Public Sector Equality Duty are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.
31. Expansion of this school would increase equality of opportunity in terms of access to school places. It would ensure that children across the whole of the Kingsmere development can obtain access to a school place close to home. If sufficient places are not available within the heart of the community this can affect access to out of school activities, social contact with peers, and travel distances. However, this proposal does not increase access to non-Church schools within the Kingsmere development.
32. **Community cohesion:** When considering a proposal, the decision-maker should consider its impact on community cohesion.
33. Expansion of this school would help to enable children living in the Kingsmere development to attend a school in their local community, which is a key element in creating community cohesion.
34. **Travel and accessibility:** Decision-makers should satisfy themselves that accessibility planning has been properly considered and the proposed changes should not adversely impact on disadvantaged groups. The decision-maker should bear in mind that a proposal should not unreasonably extend journey times or increase transport costs, or result in too many children being prevented from travelling sustainably due to unsuitable walking or cycling routes. A proposal should also be considered on the basis on how it will support and contribute to the LA’s duty to promote the use of sustainable travel.
35. Expansion of this school would prevent the need for children to be transported to schools further afield; the proposed walking bus would minimise journey times and vehicular transport and establish healthy and sustainable patterns of travel to school.
36. **Funding:** The decision-maker should be satisfied that any necessary funding required to implement the proposal will be available and that all relevant local parties (e.g. trustees or religious authority) have given their agreement.
37. An options appraisal is underway to identify the cost of expansion, which is expected to be in the region of £8m. There is not expected to be any significant difference in capital costs between building a satellite school for St Edburg’s and building a separate new school. The project would be funded from developer contributions secured/sought by the county council from local housing developments.





**OXFORDSHIRE  
COUNTY COUNCIL**

## **PUBLIC NOTICE**

### **Proposed Expansion of St Edburg's Church of England (VA) School**

Notice is given in accordance with The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 that Oxfordshire County Council intends to make prescribed alterations to St Edburg's Church of England (VA) School, Pioneer Way, Bicester, OX26 1BF, from 01 September 2023.

The Local Authority, working with the leadership team of the school, is proposing to expand St Edburg's Church of England (VA) School to a 3 form entry size, rising from the current Published Admission Number (PAN) of 60 to one of 90 from September 2023 onward. It is further proposing to expand the school onto an additional "satellite" site, and extend the age range from 3-11 to 2-11.

This Notice is an extract from the full proposal, which can be viewed under the Current Consultations listings on the Oxfordshire County Council public website at [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/stedburgs](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/stedburgs). Copies can also be requested by contacting:

**Barbara Chillman, Pupil Place Planning Manager, Oxfordshire County Council**

**Tel:** 01865 323804 **or Email:** [school.planning@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:school.planning@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Within four weeks from the date of publication of this Notice, any person may object to or make comments on the proposal by sending them to the Local Authority using the online feedback form located on the Oxfordshire County Council website as detailed above, or by email or post to the above addresses.

**Signed: Kevin Gordon, Director of Children's Services**

**Publication Date: 25 September 2020**

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# OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

## **FULL STATUTORY PROPOSAL**

The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England)  
Regulations 2013

### **Expansion of St Edburg's Church of England (VA) School**

#### **1. School and LA details**

**School:** St Edburg's Church of England (VA) School

**Address:** Pioneer Way, Bicester, OX26 1BF

**Local Authority:** Oxfordshire County Council

#### **2. Outline of proposed alteration**

In accordance with The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 ('the Prescribed Alterations Regulations'), Oxfordshire County Council is publishing this proposal to:

- Expand St Edburg's CoE (VA) School from 420 primary places to 630 primary places.
- Expand St Edburg's CoE (VA) School onto an additional "satellite" site.
- Extend the age range of St Edburg's CoE (VA) School from 3-11 to 2-11.

The alterations would be implemented as of 1 September 2023.

#### **3. Objectives**

This proposal aims to:

- Ensure sufficient primary and nursery education places for the population of the Kingsmere development in SW Bicester.
- Increase the percentage of families living in SW Bicester who are able to secure a place at their preferred primary school.
- Be supportive of high educational standards.
- Support the long-term financial viability of Bicester's primary schools.

#### **4. Background**

St Edburg's CoE (VA) School is currently a 2-form entry primary school, admitting up to 60 pupils per year group, with a total capacity for the Reception – Year 6 age range of 420 places. It also includes a one-room nursery for 3/4-year-olds.

The school is located within the Kingsmere housing development, in south-west Bicester. It was relocated to its current site, and expanded, in 2016 to meet the need for primary school places from the initial phases of the housing development.

Masterplan of the Kingsmere development, showing the school sites:



Bicester is one of the biggest growth areas within Oxfordshire. The Cherwell Local Plan includes over 10,000 new homes due to be built in the town by 2031. This scale of growth requires significant investment in additional school capacity. This will include new primary schools within the Kingsmere, Graven Hill, SE Bicester and NW Bicester developments, and new secondary schools within the Kingsmere and NW Bicester.

The first phases of this additional capacity are already complete or underway. Firstly, St Edburg's CE School relocated to Kingsmere and expanded in 2016, and Longfields Primary School expanded in 2017. The first new school – Gagle Brook Primary School in NW Bicester - opened in 2018, and a new secondary school opened in Kingsmere in 2020. A new primary school is due to open in Graven Hill in 2022. In addition, new or expanded capacity at schools surrounding Bicester provide more options for families in the area. The next step in ensuring sufficient school places in Bicester is to complete the planned school provision for the Kingsmere development in SW Bicester.

## 5. Description of proposed alterations

Oxfordshire County Council, working with the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education and the Governing Body of St Edburg's CE School, now proposes to further expand the school by one form of entry, so that it would admit up to 90 pupils per primary year group, with a total



capacity of 630 places for the Reception – Year 6 age range. The school's nursery would also expand from one room to three rooms, and the age range of the school would be extended downwards to include a small number of 2-year-olds. The actual number and age balance of nursery pupils would vary across the year.

To accommodate this expansion, the school would be reorganised onto two sites. The current site would be the base for older pupils, in Years 3-6; the Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 1 (Years 1-2) base would move to purpose-built accommodation on a new site within Phase 2 of the Kingsmere development. The Oxford Diocesan Board of Education would commission the design of the new building, which would be funded from developer funding ("Section 106") contributions secured by Oxfordshire County Council from the surrounding housing developments.

## **6. Evidence of demand**

St Edburg's CoE (VA) School is the only primary school within the Kingsmere development, which comprises over 2,400 new homes, approximately 1,000 of which are not yet completed. The school's designated area is the Kingsmere development. Pupil numbers at the school are rising rapidly, and the school's Reception places have been over-subscribed from within its designated area for the last two years. Pupil numbers within Kingsmere are expected to rise further as the remaining houses are occupied.

For the 2020 admission intake, 20 pupils living within the designated area of St Edburg's were refused places at the school, meaning they had to travel to other schools. Seven of these families were not allocated places at any of their preferred schools. Only 64.1% of first preference applicants were offered a place at the school, compared to a county average of 90.6%. Families living in SW Bicester are therefore less likely than families elsewhere to secure a place at the school of their choice. Admissions data for 2020 show that the Bicester South and Ambrosden Ward (where Kingsmere is located) has the lowest level of successful first preference applications (87.6%) within the Cherwell District, and the highest level of families being offered a school which was not one of their preferences (4.9%, compared to 1.9% of families in Oxfordshire as a whole).

In order to meet the growing population living in SW Bicester, and increase the percentage of families living in this area who are able to secure a place at the school of their choice, additional primary school capacity within the SW Bicester development is needed. A site for this additional primary school provision has been secured through a Section 106 agreement, and is located within Phase 2 of the Kingsmere development.

Population forecasts for the Bicester South MSOA show that the 0-4 population is forecast to rise by 251 children between 2019 and 2025. There is, therefore, forecast to be strong growth in this age range of population, which is unsurprising given the concentration of housing development.

A sufficiency forecast for funded early education places in Bicester South has been calculated, based on current take up and availability of places projected up to summer 2022. (Projections past that date are increasingly difficult due to other market factors and policy or funding decisions, but the population data suggests demand will continue to grow beyond

that.) This shows that there is already projected to be a small shortfall of places for 2-year-olds by 2022 and a significant shortfall for 3/4-year-old places.

| Bicester South | Predicted Demand | Available Places | Projected Sufficiency (surplus/shortfall) |
|----------------|------------------|------------------|---|
| 2 Year Olds    | <b>15</b>        | <b>12</b>        | <b>-3</b>                                 |
| 3/4 Year Olds  | <b>332</b>       | <b>186</b>       | <b>-146</b>                               |

To address this shortfall, as part of expanding St Edburg’s CE School, additional nursery capacity would be provided, and the age range of the school lowered to include 2-year-olds. (In addition, there will be increased demand for early education and childcare which does not qualify for funding, and this need would have to be met by the private, voluntary and independent sector.)

## **7. Consultation prior to publication of this proposal**

To inform this proposal, an open consultation was carried out by the county council between 15 June and 13 July 2020. The consultation invited comments on two options: a separate new 1 form entry primary school, or the expansion of St Edburg’s CE School from 2 form entry to 3 form entry, through the mechanism of splitting it across two sites.

The consultation received 71 responses:

- 34% identified as parents of children at St Edburg’s CE School
- 13% identified as parents of children at other primary schools
- 39% identified as parents of children not yet at primary school
- 56% identified as local residents.

Of these responses:

- 39% expressed support for expanding St Edburg’s CE School and 49% expressed opposition;
- 59% expressed support for a separate new primary school and 13% expressed opposition.

Both options therefore received both support and opposition, with the balance of support being greater for the option of a separate new school rather than an expansion of St Edburg’s.

The key issues raised by the consultation, and how they have shaped this proposal, are discussed below.

## **8. Rationale for proposal**

Department for Education statutory guidance on *Making significant changes (‘prescribed alterations’) to maintained schools* sets out the following factors which should be considered in proposing, and deciding on, the types of changes proposed.

## Funding

The capital (building) costs of expanding St Edburg's CE School are expected to be similar to those of building a new school, and therefore capital costs are not a factor in deciding whether to expand the existing school or establish a new school.

However, there are significant implications for revenue (running) costs for both the new or expanded school, and other local schools.

Department for Education guidance on establishing new schools discourages opening new schools which are smaller than 2 forms of entry, due to the greater risks to financial (and therefore educational) viability related to smaller schools. A new school would need to be approved by the Department for Education, which could refuse to sign a funding agreement if they considered a 1 form entry school would be unviable.

While Oxfordshire has many excellent schools which are smaller than 2 forms of entry, experience has shown that it is significantly more challenging for a new 1 form entry school to open and grow quickly enough to be viable.

Current data do not support the opening of more than 1 form of entry of additional primary school capacity within Kingsmere. Although primary pupil numbers are still growing in SW Bicester, growth in pupil numbers has slowed down, and there is now a risk that two separate schools in such close proximity competing for pupils would result in one or both schools having too few pupils to be financially viable in the longer term.

As a single, larger primary school, an expanded St Edburg's would benefit from economies of scale, for example only having one head teacher rather than the two headteachers needed for two separate schools. As the school budget is primarily based on pupil numbers any money saved on running costs means more money is spent on the children.

During the consultation, existing education providers in Bicester expressed concern that a separate new school in SW Bicester could be destabilising to other schools, as it would need to compete for pupils to enable it to grow rapidly enough to become financially viable. All of the local primary education providers who responded to the consultation supported expansion of St Edburg's CE School in preference to the establishment of a new school.

## Education standards and diversity of provision

St Edburg's CE School is a popular and successful school, which is over-subscribed and has a "Good" Ofsted rating. At the time of publication of this proposal, all primary schools in Bicester have a "Good" Ofsted rating (with the exception of Gagle Brook Primary School, which has not yet been inspected). Access to good schools for families in Bicester is therefore already very high.

During the consultation, 14% of respondents indicated that expanding St Edburg's would be beneficial to educational quality because of the proven standards at St Edburg's, and/or expressed concern that two separate schools in close proximity would be divisive. 6% of respondents were concerned that a split site would be detrimental to the effectiveness of ethos of St Edburg's CE School, for example by reducing interaction between older and younger pupils.

As set out above, the establishment of a separate new 1 form entry primary school could risk educational standards. Either the new school may grow too slowly to be viable, or it may attract pupils away from other schools, destabilising their budgets.

Expanding an existing school does not create the same challenges to financial viability as opening a brand-new school. St Edburg's is already established and operates with a substantial budget; it would receive additional funding to cover the costs of growth. As one large school, St Edburg's would have more flexibility with its budget to react to fluctuations in pupil numbers. Greater economies of scale would free up resources to benefit education, and staff would benefit from greater development opportunities.

During the consultation, 31% of respondents made clear they had a preference for a separate new school in order to increase choice and diversity of school provision, in particular for a non-church school option (21%). This is a significant argument in favour of establishing a separate new school.

However, two separate schools may not provide the degree of choice that might be imagined, as if one school is over-subscribed, families living further away would not get a place at their preferred school and therefore feel disadvantaged. A separate new school would not be able to open all year groups at once, and therefore it would be several years before parents moving into the development would be able to secure a place at the new school for older children. St Edburg's CE School would be able to set up additional classes for older pupils sooner than a new school could afford to do.

Although St Edburg's is a voluntary aided Church of England school, it is open to children of faith or of no faith - there is nothing in the school's admission policy about attendance at church. The school focuses on children's spiritual, not religious, development.

Clearly, the county council's proposal to expand St Edburg's CE School, if approved, would mean that parents specifically seeking a school unattached to the Church of England would need to send their children to a school outside of the Kingsmere development. Within Bicester town, with the exception of St Mary's (VA) Catholic School, all other schools are non-church schools.

### Travel and accessibility

During the consultation, 28% of respondents expressed concern that a split site expansion of St Edburg's would create travel and accessibility difficulties, especially for families with children at both sites. In particular, there is potential for an adverse effect on transport and the environment as parents dropping off and collecting children on two sites are more likely to do so by vehicle than by sustainable options such as walking or cycling. However, it was also noted that this could still happen if the two schools were separate, as some families may be unable to get all children into one school especially before a new school is operating in all year groups.

In response to these concerns, and to minimise any negative impact, it is proposed that St Edburg's manages a "Walking Bus" between the two sites. This would allow siblings to be dropped off together at one site. It is estimated that approximately 10% of Key Stage 2 pupils would use the Walking Bus. It is proposed that the Walking Bus would start from the new site

at 8.40 am and Key Stage 2 children would be supervised by school staff to walk to the current Pioneer Way site. At the end of the day, at 3.15 pm, Key Stage 2 children would be supervised to walk back to the new site for their parents to collect them. To allow time for movement between sites, the school would have flexible starts and finishes from 8.45-9.00 am and 3.15-3.30 pm. Wrap Around Care will be offered at both sites with earlier start times (7.15am) and later collection times (5.45pm) to ensure that parents can collect children from both sites without losing work time.

The two sites are approximately half a mile apart, for most of which there is a wide dedicated pedestrian/cycle path. The proposed Walking Bus will help establish sustainable travel to school behaviour by giving children experience of walking to school under supervision.

### Community cohesion

During the consultation a few respondents commented that one school serving the whole of the Kingsmere development would support community cohesion, and that St Edburg's had built a strong reputation for community engagement. However, this is unlikely to be a significant factor in determining this proposal.

### Equal opportunities issues

The decision-maker must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which requires them to have 'due regard' to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The relevant protected characteristics to be considered are: age (including children and young people), disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

It is not anticipated that the proposal to expand St Edburg's CE School will affect people negatively in a disproportionate manner because of their protected characteristics;. The expansion will increase the availability of school places and therefore be beneficial to children and families, although by choosing to expand St Edburg's in preference to a separate new school, there is a greater benefit to parents choosing a church school rather than those who choose a non-church school.

*There are additional factors to be considered relating to the establishment of a satellite site.*

### The rationale for a satellite site

The current site area of St Edburg's CE School is 2.22ha, which is the size required by the county council for a 2-form entry school. Expanding the school on its current site would result in it becoming over-crowded. The proposed satellite site area has been secured by the county council to support primary education provision within the Kingsmere development.

The proposal for a split site would allow an innovative approach to tailoring educational provision to the specific needs of the age groups. Younger children would not feel overwhelmed by being at a large school as they would be in an environment designed at their scale, rather than one suited to children much older. The use of the Key Stage 2 site could be adapted to better prepare children for secondary school through the creation of specialist spaces for subjects such as Music, Languages and IT.

#### Admission and curriculum arrangements

The new site would be for the younger children and the current site would be for the older children, but the school would be one primary school, and not separate Infant and Junior schools. This means that once admitted into the school, children would progress through the year groups as now, and families would not need to reapply after Key Stage 1. The school would continue to plan the whole curriculum as a whole to ensure that children have a broad and balanced experience to build their skills and knowledge. There would be a single set of subject leaders, as there are now, to provide cohesion and continuity across the whole age range. Although children would spend most of their time on one of the sites, sometimes they would use the other site – for example, sometimes the whole school would come together for events and celebrations.

#### Governance and administration

There would be one governance, leadership and management structure across both sites, and staff would be employed to work on both sites, although on a day-to-day basis most staff would be based at one site. The Head and deputy(ies) would have offices on both sites and would work equally on both sites, and both sites would have caretakers managed by the School's Business Manager.

#### Physical characteristics of the school

Each site would have its own facilities such as playgrounds, halls and dining areas. These would be tailored to the needs of the different age ranges. The two sites would be approximately half a mile, or a 10-15 minute walk, apart, and both are easily accessible to residents within the Kingsmere development.

### **9. The effect on other schools, academies and educational institutions within the area**

The proposed expansion is in line with expected population growth in the local area, and is therefore not expected to have a significant adverse effect on other educational institutions.

### **10. Project costs and funding**

An options appraisal is underway to identify the cost of expansion, which is expected to be in the region of £8m. The project would be funded from developer contributions secured by the county council from local housing developments.

## **11. Implementation and any proposed stages for implementation**

It is expected that building work will be completed by September 2023, enabling the school to increase its admission number from this date. In the first instance, the school would increase the intake into the Reception class, but if there is sufficient demand then it would also seek to open additional classes for older pupils. It would also be able to take additional nursery pupils from this date.

## **12. Objections and comments**

Comments or objections must be received by the local authority by midnight on **23 October 2020**.

Respond by:

- using the online questionnaire at <http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/stedburgs>
- emailing [school.planning@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:school.planning@oxfordshire.gov.uk) (*please quote 'St Edburg's Expansion' in the subject line*)

## **13. Decision-making**

The decision-maker for this proposed expansion is Oxfordshire County Council. The decision will be made by the Cabinet Member for Education and Cultural Services at a meeting which is open to the public, and publicised on the county council's website. The decision must be made within a period of two months of the end of this representation period, and is currently expected on 11 November 2020.

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# Service and Community Impact Assessment (SCIA)

## Front Sheet:

**Directorate and Service Area:**

**People  
Sufficiency & Access**

**What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change):**

**Expansion of St Edburg's CoE (VA) School**

**Responsible owner / senior officer:**

**Barbara Chillman**

**Date of assessment:**

**October 2020**

**Summary of judgement:**

Oxfordshire County Council, working with the leadership team of the school, proposes to expand St Edburg's CoE (VA) School to 3 forms of entry, which would involve increasing its admission number from 60 to 90 from September 2023 onward. Expansion of St Edburg's CoE (VA) School is necessary to ensure the provision of sufficient school places across the SW Bicester area, to accommodate increased demand for school places as a result of planned and permitted housing growth.

The proposed expansion would improve access to education for the local community, and would therefore have a positive impact for the local community.

## Detail of Assessment:

### Purpose of assessment:

Due to population growth and an increase in demand for school places across the SW Bicester area, expansion of St Edburg's CoE (VA) School to 3 forms of entry is proposed. This SCIA is intended to provide an assessment to guide the process of expanding the school.

### You should also include the following statement to clearly set out the reasons and context for undertaking the assessment:

Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 ("the 2010 Act") imposes a duty on the Council to give due regard to three needs in exercising its functions. This proposal is such a function. The three needs are:

- 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.

Complying with section 149 may involve treating some people more favourably than others, but only to the extent that that does not amount to conduct which is otherwise unlawful under the new Act.

The need to advance equality of opportunity involves having due regard to the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages which are connected to a relevant protected characteristic and which are suffered by persons who share that characteristic,
- take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and which are different from the needs other people, and
- encourage those who share a relevant characteristic to take part in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such people is disproportionately low.
- take steps to meet the needs of disabled people which are different from the needs of people who are not disabled and include steps to take account of a person's disabilities.

The need to foster good relations between different groups involves having due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

These protected characteristics are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment

- pregnancy and maternity
- race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
- religion or belief – this includes lack of belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- marriage and civil partnership

## **Social Value**

Under the Public Services (Social Value Act) 2012 the Council also has an obligation to consider how the procurement of services contracts with a life value of more than £173,934<sup>1</sup> might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the area affected by the proposed contract, and how it might act to secure this improvement. However, it is best practice to consider social value for all types of contracts, service delivery decisions and new/updated policies. In this context, 'policy' is a general term that could include a strategy, project or contract.

## **Context / Background:**

St Edburg's CoE (VA) School is currently a 2-form entry primary school, admitting up to 60 pupils per year group, with a total capacity for the Reception – Year 6 age range of 420 places. It also includes a one-room nursery for 3/4-year-olds.

The school is located within the Kingsmere housing development, in south-west Bicester. It was relocated to its current site, and expanded, in 2016 to meet the need for primary school places from the initial phases of the housing development.

Bicester is one of the biggest growth areas within Oxfordshire. The Cherwell Local Plan includes over 10,000 new homes due to be built in the town by 2031. This scale of growth requires significant investment in additional school capacity. This will include new primary schools within the Kingsmere, Graven Hill, SE Bicester and NW Bicester developments, and new secondary schools within the Kingsmere and NW Bicester.

The first phases of this additional capacity are already complete or underway. Firstly, St Edburg's CE School relocated to Kingsmere and expanded in 2016, and Longfields Primary School expanded in 2017. The first new school – Gagle Brook Primary School in NW Bicester - opened in 2018, and a new secondary school opened in Kingsmere in 2020. A new primary school is due to open in Graven Hill in 2022. In addition, new or expanded capacity at schools surrounding Bicester provide more options for families in the area. The next step in ensuring sufficient school places in Bicester is to complete the planned school provision for the Kingsmere development in SW Bicester.

<sup>11</sup> [EC Procurement Threshold for Services](#)

## **Proposals:**

Oxfordshire County Council, working with the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education and the Governing Body of St Edburg's CE School, proposes to further expand the school by one form of entry, so that it would admit up to 90 pupils per primary year group, with a total capacity of 630 places for the Reception – Year 6 age range. The school's nursery would also expand from one room to three rooms, and the age range of the school would be extended downwards to include a small number of 2-year-olds. The actual number and age balance of nursery pupils would vary across the year.

To accommodate this expansion, the school would be reorganised onto two sites. The current site would be the base for older pupils, in Years 3-6; the Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 1 (Years 1-2) base would move to purpose-built accommodation on a new site within Phase 2 of the Kingsmere development. The Oxford Diocesan Board of Education would commission the design of the new building, which would be funded from developer funding ("Section 106") contributions secured by Oxfordshire County Council from the surrounding housing developments.

## **Evidence / Intelligence:**

St Edburg's CoE (VA) School is the only primary school within the Kingsmere development, which comprises over 2,400 new homes, approximately 1,000 of which are not yet completed. The school's designated area is the Kingsmere development. Pupil numbers at the school are rising rapidly, and the school's Reception places have been over-subscribed from within its designated area for the last two years. Pupil numbers within Kingsmere are expected to rise further as the remaining houses are occupied.

For the 2020 admission intake, 20 pupils living within the designated area of St Edburg's were refused places at the school, meaning they had to travel to other schools. Seven of these families were not allocated places at any of their preferred schools. Only 64.1% of first preference applicants were offered a place at the school, compared to a county average of 90.6%. Families living in SW Bicester are therefore less likely than families elsewhere to secure a place at the school of their choice. Admissions data for 2020 show that the Bicester South and Ambrosden Ward (where Kingsmere is located) has the lowest level of successful first preference applications (87.6%) within the Cherwell District, and the highest level of families being offered a school which was not one of their preferences (4.9%, compared to 1.9% of families in Oxfordshire as a whole).

In order to meet the growing population living in SW Bicester, and increase the percentage of families living in this area who are able to secure a place at the school of their choice, additional primary school capacity within the SW Bicester development is needed. A site for this additional primary school provision has been secured through a Section 106 agreement, and is located within Phase 2 of the Kingsmere development.

Population forecasts for the Bicester South MSOA show that the 0-4 population is forecast to rise by 251 children between 2019 and 2025. There is, therefore, forecast to be strong growth in this age range of population, which is unsurprising given the concentration of housing development.

A sufficiency forecast for funded early education places in Bicester South has been calculated, based on current take up and availability of places projected up to summer 2022. (Projections past that date are increasingly difficult due to other market factors and policy or funding decisions, but the population data suggests demand will continue to grow beyond that.) This shows that there is already projected to be a small shortfall of places for 2-year-olds by 2022 and a significant shortfall for 3/4-year-old places.

To address this shortfall, as part of expanding St Edburg's CE School, additional nursery capacity would be provided, and the age range of the school lowered to include 2-year-olds. (In addition, there will be increased demand for early education and childcare which does not qualify for funding, and this need would have to be met by the private, voluntary and independent sector.)

To inform this proposal, an open consultation was carried out by the county council between 15 June and 13 July 2020. 71 responses were received.

### **Alternatives considered / rejected:**

The county council has a statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places. Given the current and expected growth in the school age population in this area, doing nothing would have led to failure to meet this statutory duty.

The alternative to expanding St Edburg's CoE (VA) School would be to establish a separate new 1 form entry primary school.

Ahead of this proposal, consultation invited comments on two options: a separate new 1 form entry primary school, or the expansion of St Edburg's CE School from 2 form entry to 3 form entry, through the mechanism of splitting it across two sites. The consultation received 71 responses. Of these responses:

- 39% expressed support for expanding St Edburg's CE School and 49% expressed opposition;
- 59% expressed support for a separate new primary school and 13% expressed opposition.

Both options therefore received both support and opposition, with the balance of support being greater for the option of a separate new school rather than an expansion of St Edburg's.

The decision to expand St Edburg's instead of establishing a new school was based largely on financial viability issues for small schools. Department for Education guidance on establishing new schools discourages opening new schools which are smaller than 2 forms of entry, due to the greater risks to financial (and therefore

educational) viability related to smaller schools. A new school would need to be approved by the Department for Education, which could refuse to sign a funding agreement if they considered a 1 form entry school would be unviable.

While Oxfordshire has many excellent schools which are smaller than 2 forms of entry, experience has shown that it is significantly more challenging for a new 1 form entry school to open and grow quickly enough to be viable.

Current data do not support the opening of more than 1 form of entry of additional primary school capacity within Kingsmere. Although primary pupil numbers are still growing in SW Bicester, growth in pupil numbers has slowed down, and there is now a risk that two separate schools in such close proximity competing for pupils would result in one or both schools having too few pupils to be financially viable in the longer term.

As a single, larger primary school, an expanded St Edburg's would benefit from economies of scale, for example only having one head teacher rather than the two headteachers needed for two separate schools. As the school budget is primarily based on pupil numbers any money saved on running costs means more money is spent on the children.

During the consultation, existing education providers in Bicester expressed concern that a separate new school in SW Bicester could be destabilising to other schools, as it would need to compete for pupils to enable it to grow rapidly enough to become financially viable. All of the local primary education providers who responded to the consultation supported expansion of St Edburg's CE School in preference to the establishment of a new school.

If a separate new school could be established within the Kingsmere development, it would increase choice and diversity, including providing a non-church school option. However, given that the currently available data on likely population growth only supports a 1 form entry school, the county council did not have confidence that such a school could be successfully established, without destabilising the local education market.

The expansion of St Edburg's was considered a more certain and sustainable approach to increasing primary school provision within the Kingsmere development.

## **Impact Assessment:**

### **Impact on Individuals and Communities:**

#### **Age**

The proposed expansion will help to enable pupils living in SW Bicester to attend a school close to where they live, and will therefore have a positive impact. If school places are not available within the heart of the community for children living on

new housing developments this can affect access to out of school activities, social contact with peers, travel patterns and community cohesion.

The increase in nursery provision at the school as a result of the expansion will enable more children living in the SW Bicester area to access early years education close to where they live, and will therefore also have a positive impact for pre-school age children and their families.

**Disability**

St Edburg’s CoE (VA) School is a mainstream school. The expansion is not expected to have an impact on provision for children with disability and Special Educational Needs attending this school, or who may attend the school in the future.

**Religion/belief**

Oxfordshire’s education providers include a balance of Church of England, Roman Catholic and non-faith schools. The only specific religions provided for, therefore, are CE and RC. Children of other faiths may choose a secular education or Christian education, or be educated outside the state sector. St Edburg’s is a Church of England voluntary aided school, but it considers that spiritual, not religious, development is important. The school is open to children of faith or of no faith. The school currently has children from Muslim and Hindu families as well as children from Christian families and the majority of children are from no faith families. Most schools in Bicester are non-Church schools, and places would be available for Kingsmere families at non-Church schools within a 2 mile radius.

**Sex**

St Edburg’s CoE (VA) School offers coeducational provision, as do all other Oxfordshire primary schools (the only single sex schools in the county are two secondary schools in Didcot), so the expansion is not expected to have an impact in this respect.

No specific impact has been identified on the following groups:

- Gender reassignment
- Race/nationality
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Areas of deprivation
- Rural communities

| <b>Risks</b>  | <b>Mitigations</b>  |
|---|---|
| Insufficient special school places are created at the expanded school | Annual pupil forecasting and close cooperation with district councils to forecast as accurately as possible future demand.<br>The size of the proposed school expansion has been determined based |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | on analysis of current and future demand for school places in the area. |
|--|---|

**Impact on Staff:**

**Staff**

Where schools have to turn away children due to a shortage of capacity, Admissions staff may experience stress, and negative behaviour from angry and upset parents.

| <b>Risks</b>  | <b>Mitigations</b>  |
|---|---|
| Insufficient school places are created at the expanded school, resulting in staff experiencing negative responses from parents. | Annual pupil forecasting and close cooperation with district councils to forecast as accurately as possible future demand.<br>The size of the proposed school expansion has been determined based on analysis of current and future demand for school places in the area. |

**Impact on other Council services:**

**Other council services**  
 Transport – if school places are not available close to where children live, more parents will drive their children to school, exacerbating traffic problems. If children have to be allocated schools beyond walking distance, the county council will need to fund transport.  
 Strategic planning – if sufficient school places cannot be agreed to meet the needs of housing growth, there will be a detrimental impact on strategic planning links with local planning authorities.

| <b>Risks</b>  | <b>Mitigations</b>  |
|---|---|
| There is a mismatch between where school places are available and where parents live, resulting in increased traffic and transport costs. | Expansion of school capacity serving SW Bicester will enable children living in this area to attend school close to their home. The need for additional school capacity has been considered in line with housing growth across this area. |
| Expansion of school capacity does not meet the needs of housing growth in the area.   | Close working relationships between School Organisation & Planning, the county council strategic planning team, and district council planning teams to identify the scale and timing of the new   |



|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | school provision required and secure sufficient developer contributions. |
|--|--|

**Impact on providers:**

**Providers: schools**

Without expansion, St Edburg’s would continue to turn away children due to a shortage of capacity, and school staff may experience stress, and negative behaviour from angry and upset parents.

If surplus places are created, existing schools may see a reduction in pupil numbers, and hence budgets. Even where the creation of new places is in line with the scale of population growth, the initial impact of school expansions may have a destabilising effect on pupil numbers at other nearby schools.

| <b>Risks</b>  | <b>Mitigations</b>  |
|---|---|
| Insufficient school places are created at the expanded school, resulting in staff experiencing negative responses from parents. | Annual pupil forecasting and close cooperation with district councils to forecast as accurately as possible future demand.<br>The size of the proposed school expansion has been determined based on analysis of current and future demand for school places in the area.   |
| The school expansion may lead to a reduction in pupil numbers at other nearby schools, especially in the short-term             | The demand and supply for school places in the area are monitored, considering planned and permitted housing growth. Admission data on preferences for schools in the area has been analysed. The scale of expansion in this case is small, and unlikely to have a significant impact on other schools given the scale of local housing growth. Expansion of an existing school rather than creation of a new school should minimise the impact on other schools. |

**Social Value**  
*If the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 applies to this proposal, please summarise here how you have considered how the contract might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the relevant area.*

**How might the proposal improve the economic well-being of the relevant area?**

The proposed expansion will require additional staff at the school, thus creating jobs in the area.

**How might the proposal improve the environmental well-being of the relevant area?**

Provision of additional school places within walking distance of families living in SW Bicester will reduce the need for pupils to travel to school by car or bus.

**Action plan:**

Summarise the actions that will be taken as a result of the assessment, including when they will be completed and who will be responsible. It is important that the officer leading on the assessment follows up to make sure the actions are completed, and updates the assessment as appropriate. Any significant risks identified should also be added to the appropriate service or directorate risk register, to ensure they are appropriately managed and reviewed.

| Action  | By When                        | Person responsible                               |
|---|--------------------------------|--|
| Statutory notice on expansion consultation  | 25 September – 23 October 2020 | Barbara Chillman                                 |
| Decision on expansion consultation  | 11 November 2020               | Cabinet Member for Education & Cultural Services |
| Increase in the school's admission (if approved by Cabinet Member for Education & Cultural Service) | 1 September 2023               | Barbara Chillman                                 |

**Monitoring and review:**

Try to be as specific as possible about when the assessment will be reviewed and updated, linking to key dates (for example when consultation outcomes will be available, before a Cabinet decision, at a key milestone in implementation)

**Person responsible for assessment:**

| Version | Date           | Notes<br>(e.g. Initial draft, amended following consultation) |
|---------|----------------|---|
| 2020.1  | September 2020 | Initial draft   |
| 2020.2  | October 2020   | Review following statutory representation period – no         |

|  |  |              |
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|  |  | changes made |
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Barbara Chillman  
Pupil Place Planning Officer  
Oxfordshire County Council  
County Hall  
New Road  
Oxford OX1 1ND

VIA EMAIL

23 October 2020

Dear Barbara,

### **St Edburg's Expansion**

You will recall that I wrote to you on 12 July 2020 as part of the previous consultation on school expansion in South West Bicester. I am writing to reiterate my support for the expansion of St Edburg's Church of England (VA) School.

As the consultation proposal makes very clear, Bicester is one of the fastest growing towns in the country. In recent years we have been building almost three houses per day. I have always felt very strongly that the relevant infrastructure must be in place to support growth and the challenges it brings. Given the population forecast for the Bicester South MSOA, particularly in the 0-4 year old cohort, it does seem as though there will be sufficient demand for additional school places in the coming years. Those living within the designated catchment area of the school should stand a realistic chance of securing a place for their child.

For some time now I have been concerned that growth does not produce neat packages of thirty four-year old children ready to fill a Reception class. The ages of children looking for school places tend to span across year groups. It strikes me that this has been considered in the plans to extend the age range of the school to accommodate two-year olds in the nursery. I welcome the suggestion that consideration will be given to open additional classes at age ranges, other than Reception, if there is sufficient demand.

In my response to the previous consultation, I expressed concern about the potential impact of any expansion on associated infrastructure. Some residents had told me that they were worried about an increase in traffic and parking in the area. The plan for a Walking Bus and flexible start times does seem to go some way to addressing this.

Going forward, I hope that a decision can be made in good time to enable the opening of a new primary school as soon as possible. I am very happy to engage with the Council further as it develops its plans.

Yours,

**Victoria Prentis MP**

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