

Draft specification

Oxfordshire County Council

New schools for Great Western Park, Didcot

School specification document for potential sponsors

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1. Background

Why the new schools are needed

Didcot is planned to grow by 9,000 homes over the next 20 to 25 years. As a result, Didcot's population is forecast to increase from 15,000 in 1981 to over 30,000 residents by 2016, with continued growth in the longer term

The largest housing developments planned or being constructed are:

- Great Western Park in west Didcot (GWP) – 3,300 homes being built
- Valley Park (west of GWP) – 2,300 homes proposed by Vale of White Horse
- North East Didcot – 2,030 homes in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan

There are also smaller developments proposed for Ladygrove East, Orchard Centre and Vauxhall Barracks.

The number of extra children needing school places will depend on the size, type and timing of the houses, but we estimate that by 2016 there could be 500-600 more primary aged children and 300 more secondary aged children in the town. Once all of the housing is complete, this is expected to rise to approximately 2000 extra primary-aged children and a similar amount of secondary aged children.

This growing population will need new schools: each of the major developments is expected to provide two new primary schools, and there is also a new school proposed as part of the Ladygrove East development. There will also be at least one new secondary school.

This specification covers the two primary schools and the secondary school required for the Great Western Park development. Proposals are invited for one of, or a combination of, these schools.

Existing educational provision in this area

The Didcot partnership currently includes 12 primary schools (6 within the town and 6 in surrounding villages), a boys' secondary school and a girls' secondary school. There is also a community nursery school.

There are no FE colleges in the town, although Abingdon and Witney College delivers some courses to meet employer training needs from a facility at Milton Park. There are no special schools in the partnership.

School	Type (May 2013)	Admission number (2013)
Lydalls Nursery School	Community nursery	30 fte places
All Saints CE (VA) Primary School, Didcot	VA Church of England primary	60
Blewbury Endowed CE Primary School	VC Church of England primary	25

Chilton Primary School	Community primary	30
Hagbourne CE Primary School	VC Church of England primary	30
Harwell Community Primary School	Community primary	30
Ladygrove Park Primary School, Didcot	Primary applying for academy status June 2013	60
Long Wittenham CE Primary School	VC Church of England primary	15
Manor School, Didcot	Primary applying for academy status June 2013	75
Northbourne CE (VA) Primary School	VA Church of England primary	45
South Moreton School	Community primary	25
Stephen Freeman Community School, Didcot	Community primary	45 (to rise to 60)
Willowcroft Community School, Didcot	Primary applying for academy status June 2013	60
Didcot Girls School	Girls' secondary academy	240
St Birinus School	Boys' secondary academy	240

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

Proposed University Technical College

At the same time as Oxfordshire County Council has been planning for new schools at Great Western Park, a proposal has been submitted to the DfE to create a University Technical College (UTC) in Didcot, intended to open in 2015 (subject to Funding Agreement approval). This would provide 600 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 Didcot, and therefore potentially offers approximately 300 additional places for the 14-19 age group to Didcot.

The UTC has received initial approval by the DfE, subject to a satisfactory funding agreement. There is still a possibility that the UTC will not proceed to opening, and planning to meet Didcot's needs must be flexible enough to respond to this, as well as potentially other changes of circumstances over the long time span affecting the establishment of a new secondary school.

This current specification is based on the assumption that the UTC does open. This has delayed the need for a new secondary school, and removed the need for additional post-16 provision. Subject to agreement for the UTC to be located on the GWP site, it is expected that the new secondary school and the UTC will share some facilities.

Consultation

Local consultation was undertaken by the county council from 28 January to 31 March 2013:

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

The consultation resulted in 133 responses.

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

- Co-educational secondary education.
- Greater choice and diversity, for example through the new schools being run by different providers.
- There is some demand for Catholic education, but also concern that a Catholic secondary school would not provide as much additional choice for the town, given the single-sex nature of existing provision.
- Greater provision of vocational courses and maths/science/technical courses.
- Integrated provision for pupils with special educational needs.

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

The consultation results have informed this specification, which was approved by the Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet on 21 May 2013.

2. Details of the new schools

Types of school

This specification is for three schools, to be offered by providers separately or in combination:

Primary School 1

- A 2 form entry school.
- Age range: 3-11.
- Admission number: 60.
- Total places provided for Reception to Year 6: 420 places.
- Nursery places provided: 26fte.
- Other details: facilities to allow the provision of Children's Centre services are included in the building design.

Primary School 2

- A 2 form entry school.

- Age range: 3-11.
- Admission number: 60.
- Total places provided for Reception to Year 6: 420 places.
- Nursery places provided: 26fte.

Secondary School

Based on projected pupil numbers and the planned opening of the University Technical College in 2015, it is expected that an additional secondary school will be required to provide:

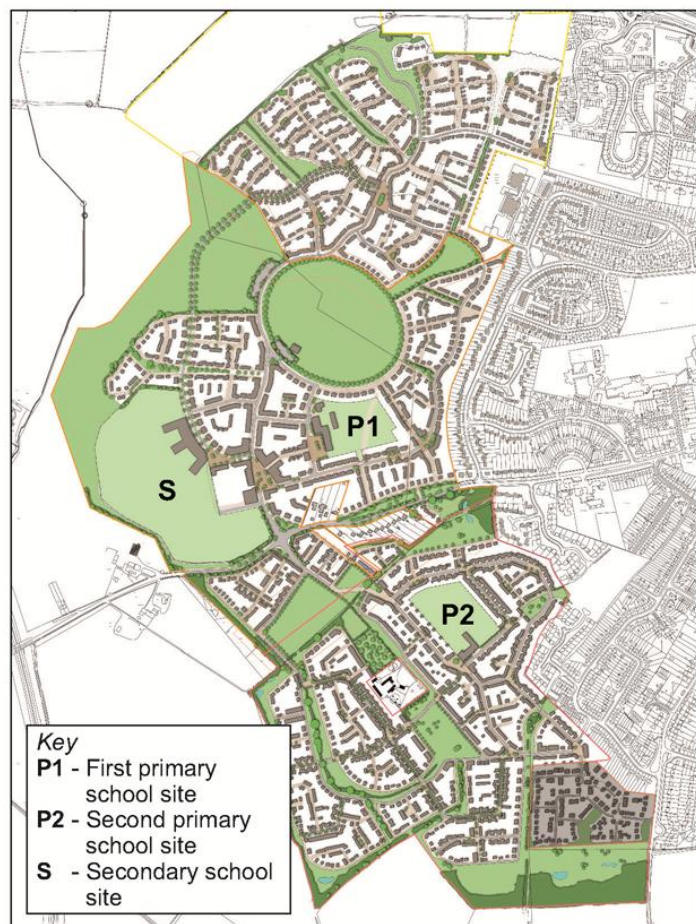
- Up to 8 forms of entry in Key Stage 3 (admission number 240).
- Up to 7 forms of entry in Key Stage 4 (with some pupils choosing to transfer to the UTC).
- Age range: 11-16 (with sixth form provision delivered across the existing two schools and the UTC). There may be potential for sixth form provision in the longer term, depending on local population growth.
- Total places provided for Year 7 to Year 11: up to approximately 1200 places.
- Other details: co-educational.

Location

The new schools will serve the Great Western Park development to the west of Didcot, lying partly in South Oxfordshire District Council, and partly within the Vale of White Horse District Council.

The first phase of primary provision for this development has been provided through extension of Stephen Freeman School, on the north east edge of the development; secondary provision has so far been through existing schools.

No specific transport arrangements for the primary schools are deemed necessary given the close proximity to children's homes. The county council will support the new schools in encouraging safe travel to school, including walking and cycling.



The secondary school will serve a wider area. As the existing secondary schools are single-sex, it is expected that these and the new school will serve the whole of the

partnership area, providing a choice between single sex and coeducational provision.

Timescale

- Primary School 1 is due to open September 2015.
- Primary School 2 is expected to open September 2017, but this date is subject to the rate of completions, and thus population growth, in the Great Western Park development.
- The Secondary School is expected to open September 2017.

Size and growth of schools

The schools will be expected to be flexible in how they organise 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 Great Western Park are met without promoting or encouraging a large scale relocation of existing pupils from other schools.

Any proposals which seek to attract pupils from beyond Didcot would need to clearly demonstrate how they would ensure that the identified needs of Didcot would be met.

Primary schools: initial capacity has been provided at Stephen Freeman Primary School. In order to allow all children living in Great Western Park to attend this or one of the new primary schools, the county council seeks to commission the following additional Reception – Year 6 places:

	Additional primary school places required (approx.)	Primary school 1	Primary school 2
2015/16	210	Opens	✘
2016/17	320	✓	✘
2017/18	420	✓	Opens?
2018/19	460	✓	✓
2019/20	500	✓	✓
2020/21	510	✓	✓
2021/22	570	✓	✓
2022/23	600	✓	✓
2023/24	640	✓	✓
2024/25	670	✓	✓
2025/26	700	✓	✓
2026/27	730	✓	✓
2027/28	750	✓	✓
2026/27	770	✓	✓
2027/28	790	✓	✓

The exact distribution of pupils across the two schools will be determined by the phasing of different areas of housing development and parental preference.

Secondary school: initial capacity is available at the existing secondary schools. From 2015 additional capacity for 14-19 year olds is expected through a new University Technical College. In order to allow all children living in Great Western Park to attend a secondary school within Didcot, the county council seeks to commission the following additional places:

	Key stage 3	Key stage 4	Total
2017/18	60	0	60
2018/19	210	0	210
2019/20	330	30	360
2020/21	450	90	540
2021/22	450	150	600
2022/23	510	210	720
2023/24	630	240	870
2024/25	720	300	1020
2025/26	720	420	1140

Design of school and capital funding

Under Section 106 of the Town and County Planning Act, 1990, the county council has negotiated sites and capital funding for the three schools. The cost of building the primary schools will be met by the Great Western Park housing developers. The cost of building the first phase of the secondary school will be met by the Great Western Park developers; subsequent housing developments are expected to provide funding for future phases of the secondary school.

Each primary school site is 2.2ha. The secondary school site is 10.1ha; it is expected that this will be shared with the University Technical College, with some shared use of facilities.

The sites are expected to be made available to academies 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 Primary School 1 is already underway. Sponsors will not, therefore, have the opportunity for any involvement in the design of the school building. The new buildings will meet all current guidelines. There may be opportunities for sponsors of Primary School 2 and the secondary school to be involved in the design of the building due to their later planned opening date.

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.

We seek sponsors for new schools who will help us to achieve this vision.

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.
- Rigorously focus on educational standards to ensure that every child and young person 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.
- Seek out and share best practice within and beyond the school, promoting innovation and creativity in learning and teaching.
- Implement rigorous processes of self-evaluation and continual improvement, including recognising the importance of Pupil Voice in these processes.
- Secure outstanding and dynamic leadership, management and governance.
- Attract, retain and develop the highest quality teachers and support staff to ensure good or better teaching and learning, and effective and motivated workforces.
- Provide evidence of robust and effective financial management

Supporting vulnerable learners and those with special educational needs

The needs of vulnerable children and young people should be met locally wherever possible. The new schools 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.

Proposals are particularly welcome from sponsors who can offer one or more of the following, co-located/integrated within the mainstream provision:

- Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties primary provision – short-term and/or part-time as well as long-term and/or full-time.

- Provision for vulnerable Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils, including those with Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties, who require and individualised/small group approach or alternative provision.
- Provision for primary and secondary pupils on the Autistic Spectrum Continuum, or with complex/severe Speech, Language and Communication Needs, Physical Difficulties, Hearing Impairment and Visual Impairment.
- High quality provision for vulnerable 2 year olds.

Working in partnership

The schools will be part of the Didcot 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 plays a key role within its immediate community and the wider local economy.
- 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 young people and families in Didcot.
- 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 Great Western Park community would be welcomed.

The county council would also welcome the involvement of the schools in providing community access to appropriate facilities, which may include sports and arts facilities, adult learning and ICT provision.

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.

4. How to apply

The county council must receive outline Expressions of Interest by 3 July 2013 and requires one hard copy and one electronic copy of all documentation.

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

Further information is available from, and Expressions of Interest should be sent to:
Barbara Chillman
Service Manager – Pupil Place Planning
Children, Education & Families
Oxfordshire County Council
County Hall
New Road
Oxford
OX1 1ND
Tel: 01865 816459
Fax: 01865 783185
barbara.chillman@oxfordshire.gov.uk

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 13 September 2013 will invite the short-listed proposers to submit a more detailed application by 25 October 2013.

The short-listed proposers will also be invited to deliver a presentation of their proposals during the first two weeks of November.

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